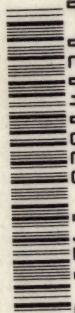
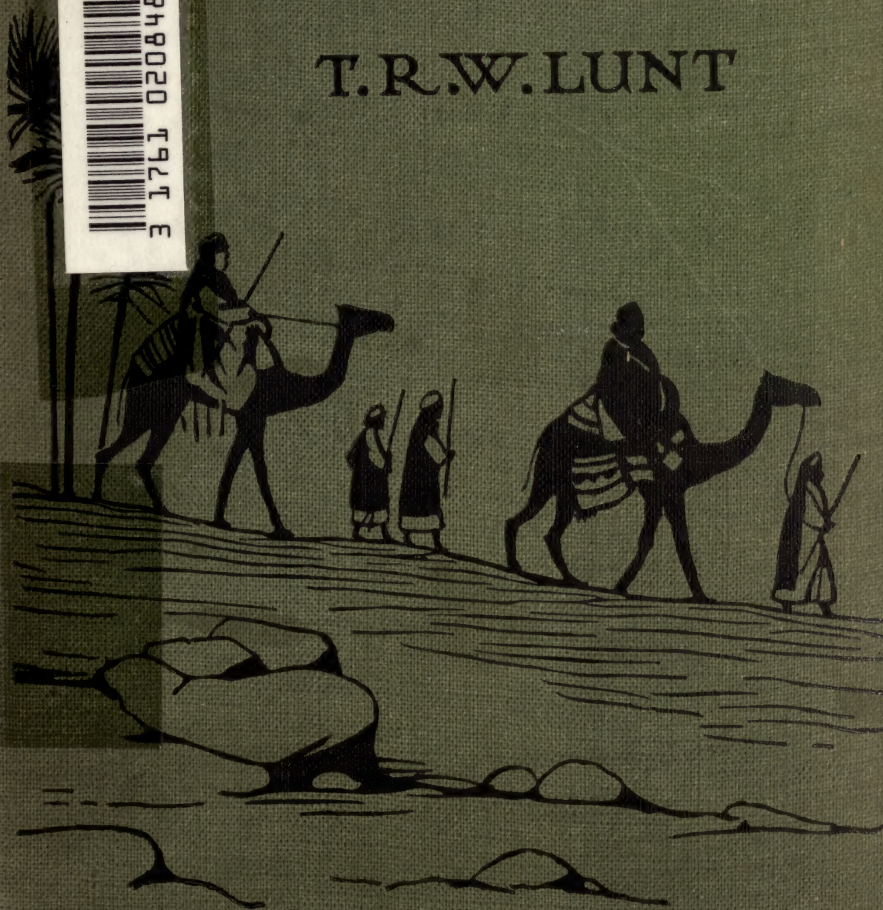


# The Story OF ISLAM

T. R. W. LUNT



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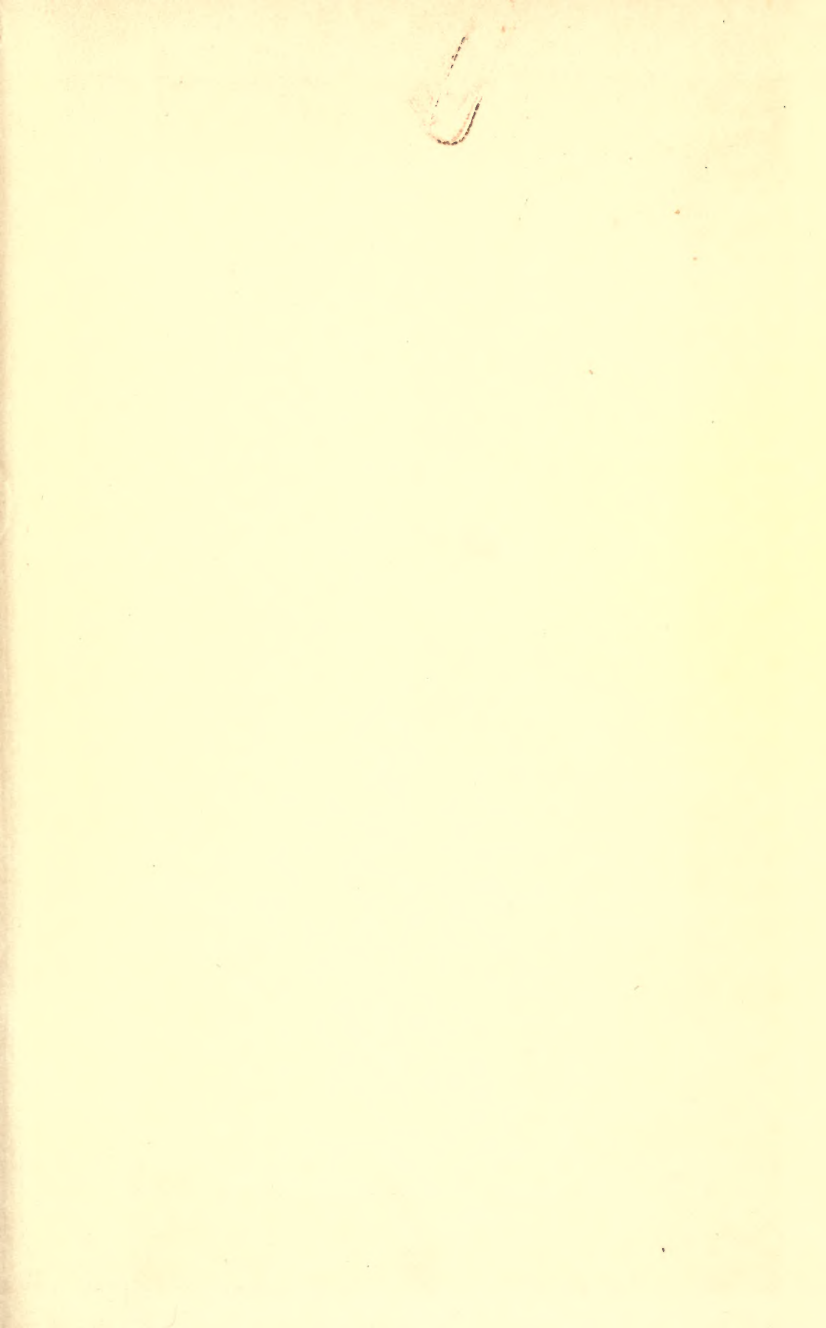
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EVENING PRAYER.

*Islam was born in the desert.*

THE  
STORY OF ISLAM

BY  
THEODORE R. W. LUNT  
GENERAL SECRETARY, NATIONAL LAYMEN'S  
MISSIONARY MOVEMENT  
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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

### TO THIRD EDITION

It has been strange indeed to revise this book in barracks, amid efforts to learn to fire big guns—possibly against the Turks. And yet this necessity which lies upon us Englishmen to-day only emphasizes afresh the importance of our trying to understand the real problem of Islam.

When the war is over, Islam will remain. Whatever state of disorganization it may be in and whatever its centre, it will still tower up before us gaunt and shadowed as one of the most difficult problems of civilization and as the great reproach of the Christian Church.

We can do nothing to help Moslems, or to solve their problem, unless we know something of their story and have tried to understand the power and fascination of their rugged simple creed.

Those of us who are called to fight—for honourable necessity—have the lesser task

though it be costly. The real opportunity will lie with those who come after—with those, in fact, who are at school to-day. Their task will be not to destroy but to build, to dream holy dreams of a great World Kingdom of Love and Gentleness and Truth and Purity and Honour, and to consecrate their lives to the One from Whom and through Whom alone these things can come.

THEO. R. W. LUNT.

R.F.A. MESS, REDFORD BARRACKS,  
EDINBURGH, *January* 1916.

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# THE STORY OF ISLAM

## CHAPTER I

‘YOUTH AND ITS SCHOOLING’

‘The boy is father of the man.’

‘Islam was born in the desert.’

EDWIN ARNOLD.

CLOSE to the focus of three great continents, where East meets West and North meets South, Asia almost touching both Africa and Europe, lies the great unknown country of Arabia, the ‘Land of the Desert.’

The long, low coast-line of its western shore is familiar enough to all who travel to the East. About seventy miles behind that coast lies a wild chain of desert mountains. Here, in a valley snuggling among massive peaks, is an Arab town, a kind of mountain fastness, lying in an amphitheatre of rugged hills.

It marks the spot, so the Arab legend runs, where long years ago Hagar the

bondswoman laid her son, parched and dying of a desert thirst, while she drew away out of reach of his cries, and 'lifted up her voice and wept.' Here, too, is the well from which she filled her bottle and gave the lad to drink, revered to-day by all good Arabs as the sacred well of Zemzem.

**Moham-  
med's Birth  
570 A.D.**

In this town of Mecca there lived in the year 570 A.D. a young Arab widow mother. She had not been married long when her husband Abdallah joined a caravan on a long trading journey up to Syria. On his way back he sickened of some desert fever and died, and a son was born to her after the father's death. The child's grandfather was a person of considerable importance, the patriarchal head of the ruling clan, the Koreish. He took the boy in his arms and went to the sacred temple of Mecca, and gave thanks to God. The child was named Mohammed.

**Childhood.**

His mother was poor, but she was of noble family; and so, according to the custom of Arab aristocracy, the child was not nursed at home but entrusted to the care of a woman of one of the wild wandering tribes of the desert for his first five

years. The boy's earliest recollections must have been of wild Bedouin life, in which he grew strong and robust in frame, trained in the pure speech and free manners of the desert. For little more than a year he returned to his mother and his home, but at the age of seven his mother died, and he was left an orphan. He was old enough to feel her loss very deeply, and also the desolation of his orphan state. The shadow overcast his life and turned his thoughts to melancholy. His grandfather, Abd al Muttalib, was an old man now, and Mohammed was his favourite grandson. He took the lad to his own home and was more than ordinarily kind to him; yet Mohammed never forgot his mother, nor the sorrow of her death. No doubt it did much to make him the pensive, meditative man he afterwards became—anyhow it set him thinking.

When he was eight years old the boy's heart was again wounded by the death of his kind grandfather and guardian. With him he had lived in the proudest home in Mecca, for Abd al Muttalib had been a kind of hereditary ‘lord mayor’ of the town, whose special duty it was to take

charge of the Temple and the Holy Well, and to care for the many pilgrims that came to visit them. Now the 'clan' was left without its proper head, and Mohammed was given into the charge of his uncle, Abu Talib.

**Education.**

There was little ordinary 'schooling' for the Arabs of those days, except for the favoured few, and Mohammed, fatherless, motherless, and now grandfatherless, was not among these. Probably he never even learned to write. His school was the schooling of the desert and the caravan; he was to become his uncle's 'handy-man,' and for the present the best thing he could do was to go and help in looking after the camels and sheep which his uncle kept on the slopes of Mount Arafat.

**The Arabs.**

Who were these Arabs from whom Mohammed sprang and among whom he lived? They were cousins of another mighty race, the Jews, their neighbours, for both traced their descent from Abraham—the Jews through Isaac and Jacob, the Arabs through Ishmael, and also through Esau who married the daughter of Ishmael. In a marvellous way have the Arabs all through their history been fulfilling the old prophecy of the sons of

## ‘Youth and its Schooling’ 5

Ishmael: ‘He shall be as a wild ass among men: his hand shall be against every man and every man’s hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren.’<sup>1</sup> How better could we describe the Arab to-day? The description was equally true in the days of Mohammed. Customs and ways of men change slowly in the East when they change at all, and the Arab all through history has clung to the wandering and warlike habits of his patriarch Ishmael, and follows the same rude, natural mode of life which existed in Arabia then.

The wild ass among men—independent, haughty, hater of towns, dweller in the wilderness, untameable;<sup>2</sup> it is a description that stirs our blood. The Arab roves through boundless deserts in wild and unfettered freedom, despising a ‘civilized’ life, scorning its comforts, proud and haughty in mien and character, the one untameable race of all the world.

In such a race was Mohammed born. True, the Arabs were not all Bedouins of the desert. Towns had sprung up where caravan routes crossed, or where rich wells

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xvi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Job xxxix. 5-8.

and springs attracted a constant stream of shepherds and camel drivers, or more often around some spot consecrated by tradition as holy ground, and by custom as a place of pilgrimage.

Mohammed's  
Shepherd  
Life.

Mohammed was a child of the town—a Hadesi—but he was a child of the desert too. For the town dwellers of Arabia were also her travelling merchants, and, as in Joseph's time, they were known in distant countries as men of merchandise and caravan. Like many a seer and patriarch of old he spent some years in shepherd life among the Bedouins who tended Abu Talib's camels and sheep on the slopes of Mount Arafat. It was a wild, open, and lonely life, such as has developed the thoughtfulness and strong self-reliance of many another man. Long, hot days under the burning tropical sun, with the responsibility of valuable flocks to be protected and fed, could not but train his powers of observation. Long, still nights beneath the innumerable stars of a rainless sky would develop a deep wondering thoughtfulness in a boy already inclined to melancholy and meditation, and naturally taciturn.

## ‘Youth and its Schooling’ 7

When he was twelve years old there came to Mohammed the chance of visiting foreign places. Abu Talib proposed joining a caravan that was going to Syria where he had business to transact. As the caravan was about to start and Abu Talib was mounting his camel, Mohammed, overcome by the prospect of a long separation, clung to his uncle, begging to be allowed to join the party. For some months he served as his uncle's caravan boy. He had never before been far away from home, and the long journey through the desert northwards must have strongly impressed his mind. ‘The imagination of the people had filled the solitudes, as has been the case in all lands, with supernatural inhabitants, monstrous and malignant, the genii or djinns of the *Arabian Nights*. The horror of loneliness, either in the night or in the equally silent noontide, found expression in mysterious tales and legends haunting every hill and vale of the regions through which he passed.’

Mohammed  
visits  
Foreign  
Lands.

The caravan bivouaced wherever there was water, preferably in any town or trading centre. Round the camp fire in the evening the boy would hear much

Mohammed  
meets  
Christians.

that was strange and new. At Mecca he had heard but little of the Jews and their religion, and less of the Christians; but there were many Jewish settlements on this road up north, and at least a few outposts of the Christian Church. Christian preachers of the Syrian Church preached in the big centres, and we are told that Abu Talib's caravan was at one time entertained by Buhaira, a Christian monk.

In some of the places where the caravan encamped they found settled Christian communities with churches and crosses and pictures, and other symbols of the Faith. Mohammed would hear how these same rites were practised in the centre of world-power—his attention would be arrested by the fact that the great Emperor owed allegiance to the Gospel. He saw, too, how everywhere the Christians were respected as men of learning.

But what was the Christian teaching he would hear? Alas! the Church of Christ was rent by factions, and false teaching prevailed, at any rate in the East. The simplicity which had characterised the Church in the earlier days when Christians were oppressed and per-

secuted had passed away; as one of their own historians put it, ‘the World had entered the Church.’ Christ Jesus had no longer the pre-eminence; instead of a rich consciousness of His glory and beauty and power, the minds of Christians were full of theories about Him and of strange and false ideas of God. The Talmud and the Apocryphal Gospels, with their crude, strange myths, were set beside the Bible, and truth and falsehood were dangerously intertwined. Many had ceased to believe in JESUS as indeed the Son of God. Some deified the Virgin Mary, giving her a place in the Trinity; to them Jehovah was no longer the God of the universe but of the Jews only.

‘In all probability Mohammed never heard a word of the New Testament; the pages of the Korân bear silent testimony to the shameful fact that the only way in which the Christianity of that time and place reached Mohammed was through the false Gospels.’<sup>1</sup>

Even in these early days Mohammed would ponder these things and sift them in his mind, and if at this time he had

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Arnold, *Christianity and Islam*, p. 32.

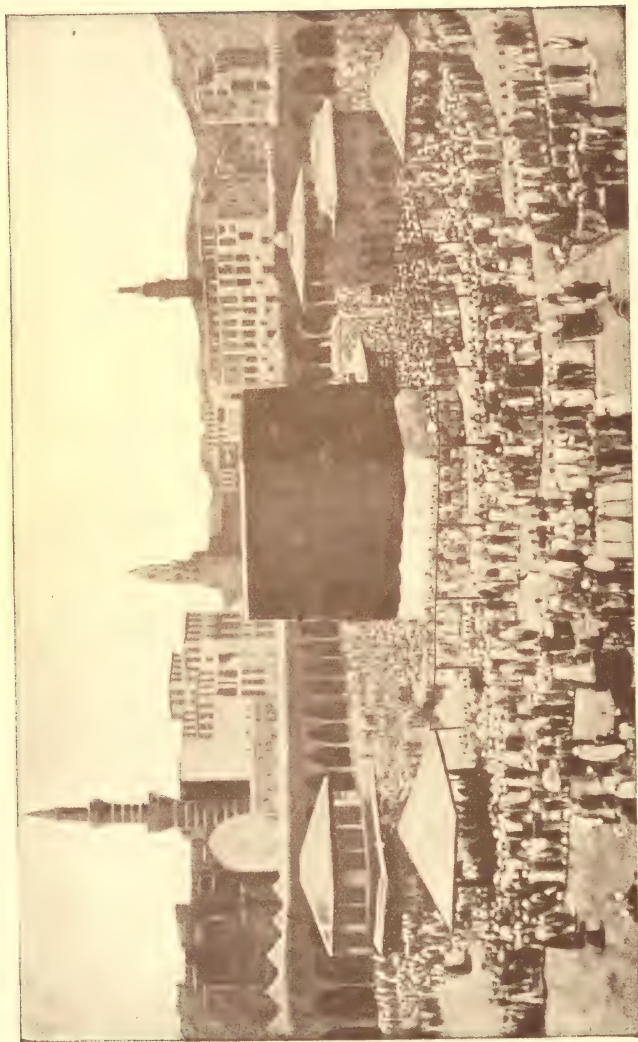
longings and aspirations for a purer and higher religion than the star worship and crude idolatry of his countrymen, it need not surprise us that such Christianity, overlaid with myths and fables, and confused by the worship of saints and images, failed to satisfy his longings or to fulfil his aspirations.

In later days, when Mohammed had become the founder of a new religion and the ruler of a mighty Empire, and was acclaimed the Prophet of God, Moslem writers began to weave strange and unworldly incidents and miraculous signs into the account of his journey—indeed, into all the stories of his boyhood. Angel wings sheltered him from the noontide heat, and withered trees were clothed with leaves to give him shade, and a strange fire is said to have played about his head, marking him as the future Prophet of God. In reality the long journey seems to have been uneventful enough.

Yet on his return he would look on Mecca with opened eyes.

We can picture Mohammed going sadly back to the worship of the Kaaba and





THE KAABA AT MECCA.

*'Recognized as the religious centre of all Arabia.'*

the religion of Arabia. The Kaaba was a small and simple building, almost a cube as the name implies, about 27 feet square and 34 feet high. Originally it had been the local sanctuary of the Koreish tribe and contained only one image, that of Hobal, their tribal god. Long before Mohammed's days, however, images of the local deities of other tribes had been set up beside Hobal, until it was a veritable pantheon, and was recognised as the religious centre of all Arabia.

The Kaaba's chief claim to this distinction lay in the famous ‘Black Stone’ of Mecca, which, encircled with a band of silver, was built into its outer wall four feet from the ground. The ‘Black Stone.’

This stone is described as about six inches by eight inches in size, of a reddish-black colour, stained by sin, so the Arabs say, and dotted with coloured crystals. Its history is shrouded in mystery and myth, but Mohammed was taught to look upon it as one of the stones of Paradise brought to earth by the angel Gabriel. Probably it was an aerolite. Then, as now, it was regarded by all true Arabs as man's most sacred possession, and was the object of

pilgrimage to Arabs of all clans, and from even the most distant parts, that they might touch or kiss it.

An Arab  
Legend.

The story of the Kaaba is no less mysterious and wonderful. Originally built to guard or mark a sacred spot connected in Arabian legend with the story of Ishmael, its true history has been enshrouded and obscured in a cloud of myths. According to the inventive genius of Arabian writers it was first constructed in heaven 2000 years before the creation of the world, and Adam erected a replica on earth exactly below the spot its perfect model occupies in heaven. At the Flood the sacred building was destroyed, and God is said to have instructed Abraham to journey from Syria to rebuild it with the help of Hagar and Ishmael.

The  
Religion of  
Arabia.

How uncouth and far behind the times it all seemed! The Jews had their Prophet and law-giver Moses, the Nazarenes looked to Jesus, the Persian magicians quoted Zoroaster, even Abyssinia was a homogeneous kingdom owning allegiance to the Gospel. Every nation had its revelation and its Book;—Arabia had none at all, no open vision, no Prophet,

nothing certain. It was but a tangle of tribes and clans with hardly any cohesion at all. Each clan was a law to itself, a separate unit, in competition with all other clans, and the law of the blood-feud tyrannized everywhere. Such a social organization was calculated to ensure the maximum of confusion with the minimum of achievement. Mohammed could not but contrast it all with the definiteness, strenuousness, and order of the political and social organizations which he had seen abroad. There could be no law, for there was no ruler; no justice, for there was no supreme authority; no progress, for there was no plan.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I

1. What is known of Mohammed's parents and grandparents?
2. Describe Mohammed's education. What part of it did him most good?
3. Describe the Arab race.
4. Wherein lay the chief interest of Mohammed's caravan journeys? To what countries would he go?
5. Describe the Kaaba, and the worship of Arabia in olden days.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY MANHOOD

‘The future comes not from before to meet us, but streams up from behind over our heads.’—RAHEL LEVIN.

Mohammed's First Fighting.

So the years passed on, and Mohammed grew from boyhood to youth, fair of character and of honourable bearing among his fellow citizens. Though he shunned the coarser sins and licentious practices of the city he could no longer as a young Meccan hold aloof from the civil and social life of his day. When he was about twenty he received ‘his baptism of fire,’ and fought in his first battle. The Koreish were at war with a neighbouring tribe. The cause of the war was insignificant enough, but it is typical of the slight causes of the blood-feuds of that day.

At certain seasons of the year it was the custom of the tribes to gather at the larger towns for fairs. Of these the most important was the sacred Fair of

Ukaz, a large market town not far from Mecca.

It was at one of these annual Ukaz fairs <sup>A Blood-</sup> that the trouble arose. An arrogant <sup>feud.</sup> Koreish poet had been boastfully vaunting the superiority of his tribe, and was struck by a zealot of the Hawazin tribe. A story got about that a Hawazin girl had been ill-treated by some Koreish maidens. A certain man of the Koreish was unable to pay a debt to a man of the Hawazin tribe. Arab blood boiled hot. The Hawazin creditor thereupon seated himself in a conspicuous place in the market with a monkey by his side, and proclaimed to all who passed by, in the true Eastern language of figure of speech: 'If you will give me another such ape, I will give you in exchange my claim on . . .' naming the debtor, with his full pedigree, back to Kinana, an ancestor of the Koreish. This he kept vociferating to the intense annoyance of the Kinana, till one of them drew his sword and cut off the monkey's head. In an instant the whole Hawazin and Kinana tribes were embroiled in bloody strife.

The trouble was patched up at the time,

but only to burst forth into a fiercer fury a few years later, when a spiteful murder supplied more serious cause of offence. Then the fierce fire of tribal hatred was unquenchable, and the whole country was embroiled in a war which lasted for four years, with short truces and respites, and ended at last in the Koreish agreeing to pay blood money in the shape of hostages for the Hawazins they had slain.

Into some, at least, of the battles of this war, Mohammed, then in his teens, accompanied his uncle. He seems to have played no conspicuous or glorious part, and even in later days, when he referred to it, it was without enthusiasm or pride. Perhaps he discharged some arrows at the enemy—more likely he acted as attendant to his uncle, collecting arrows and handing them to him to shoot. Indeed, neither then nor at any later period of his career was Mohammed distinguished for his physical courage or martial daring.

Mohammed's Appearance.

Let us now introduce ourselves to our hero himself. His face has taken the set features of manhood, and we may safely apply to him the picture left by his contemporaries of the man as they knew him,

and as in later years they bowed beneath his influence and power. He was no Saul in stature, though perhaps above the average height; yet in his countenance there was much that we are accustomed to expect in a leader of men. A Napoleonic nose, a head too big for the body, flowing jet black locks, falling on either side of his face, intense, gleaming black eyes, slightly blood-shot, an ample beard and moustache covering a rather sensuous mouth must have given him a striking and commanding appearance. His skin was slightly fairer than that of most Arabs, with a faint tinge of blue. Across his ample forehead ran a prominent vein, of which much is said, and which used to swell and throb when he was angry. Yet, withal, his face could have its gentler moods; he could be kindly when he would, and to the end he was a lover of children.

Such was his outward appearance; we have some records, too, of his manner of life among his fellow-citizens in Mecca—records which show no trace of the man that was to be; he was respected but undistinguished. From early manhood they named him Al Amin—‘The Faithful,’—and he seems to have been regarded by

His Manner  
of Life.

his fellow-citizens as a solid, dependable, brotherly, genuine man. Passionate and unrestrained, yet a serious, sincere, character, capable of real amiability, and with a good laugh in him withal.

Fair of  
Ukaz.

Year by year would come fresh stimulus to his active mind. With his fellow-citizens he went regularly to the annual fair at Ukaz, probably on business as well as pleasure bent. This fair was indeed one of the few institutions of Arabia which could well be called 'national.' Thither during two sacred months of truce the many scattered tribes gathered. It was the 'Olympia' of Arabia. The rivalry was not the rivalry of discus and javelin, but of poetry and eloquence. Ukaz was, indeed, the press, the stage, the pulpit, the parliament, and the 'Academie Française' of the Arab people. It was the focus of all the literature of Arabia. Thither resorted the poets of these rival clans and tribes, to a literary congress without formal judges but with unbounded influence. And because it was the centre of emulation for Arab poets, it was also a kind of annual review of Bedouin virtues and Arabian religion. For it was in poetry

that the Arab—as indeed man all the world over—expressed his highest thoughts.

At these fairs a strange assortment of religious opinions would be found. There would be Christian preachers, probably of many rival factions, each not only proclaiming his ‘gospel’ but disclaiming all the others, Jews and Sabæans, Zoroastrians and Hanîfites, each with complete systems of religion. The orators of each Arab tribe, too, vied with one another in acclaiming the superior powers and merits of their own tribal gods, their own sacred spot or relics, and their particular superstitious traditions.

Though the discords were so great and the causes of friction so numerous, these discordant notes were sounding a kind of harmony in the peaceful rivalries of a national fair. For in the long years of history it was seldom that the peace of the fairs was seriously broken, or the two months’ truce for attending them violated, or the sacred spots of a tribe desecrated by bloodshed. How was this? There was no central government, no punitive authority other than that of the tribe which was in the ascendant at the time,

Was there  
Hope of a  
United  
Arabia?

or the strongest combination of clans allied for the moment by some common interest. It was not in the government that hope for the future lay.

The Possibilities of the Arabs.  
(a) Germ of Belief in One Supreme God.

Was it in religion? At the bottom of all mythologies, at the back of the rudest superstitions and crudest idolatries the whole world over, there are fragments of truth. And in Arabia, lying so close to the countries of God's earliest revelation to mankind, we should expect yet more than this. Long centuries before, the Book of Job had been written in Arabia; Moses spent forty years there, leading a Bedouin life in charge of the flocks of his father-in-law; and Jethro, high priest of Midian as he was, had prepared burnt-offerings and sacrifices for the one true God, confessing, 'Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods.' The Queen of Sheba journeying from the South to see the wisdom of Solomon may have taken back with her fragments of the truth.

The wonder is that these sparks of light had never burst into the flame of worship of the one true God. Instead they were all but extinguished; none but a thoughtful

man would recognise behind the gross fetishism, and the thousand petty gods of the Arab tribes, acknowledgment of the ancient belief in one supreme Deity. Yet there it was, as history proves. And Mohammed saw it.

There were two other common elements <sup>(b) Common Ancestry.</sup> which all Arabia shared: a common an- <sup>(c) Common Tongue.</sup>cestry giving them very marked national characteristics and a strong Arabian sentiment or patriotism; and a common tongue spoken (with some variation of dialect) by Bedouin and Hadesi all through that vast land of desert.<sup>1</sup> These were both assets of great value in Mohammed's future schemes. Whether as yet he recognized their possibilities we do not know. Anyhow he was no agitator. After all who was he? Only his uncle's dependent.

As a rule in the East men marry young, but Mohammed was an exception. <sup>Mohammed's First Marriage.</sup> At twenty-five marriage and love came to him rather than were sought by him, and they were the making of his life. For there is no doubt that his wife Khadijah deserves to rank among the great women of history. During her

<sup>1</sup> The area of Arabia about equals that of India.

lifetime her great and strong influence upon Mohammed kept him from stumbling where afterwards he fell, and as she was a woman of considerable wealth, marriage very greatly altered her husband's material and social position.

It happened in this wise. Abu Talib, finding his own family increasing faster than his ability to provide for them, bethought him of setting his nephew to earn a livelihood for himself, and addressed him in these words :

‘I am, as thou knowest, a man of small substance, and truly the times deal hardly with me. Now there is a caravan of thine own tribe about to start for Syria, and Khadîjah needeth men of our tribe to send forth with her merchandise. If thou wert to offer thyself she would readily accept thy services.’

To which Mohammed very respectfully replied : ‘Be it so as thou hast said.’

This sent Abu Talib off to visit Khadîjah.

‘We hear that thou hast engaged such an one for two camels, and we should not be content that my nephew's hire were less than four.’ To this she replied :

‘Hadst thou asked this thing for one

of a distant or alien tribe, I would have granted it: how much rather now that thou askest it for a near relative and friend ?'

So the matter was settled, and Mohammed went in charge of the caravan. His sagacity and shrewdness carried him prosperously through the undertaking, and when with the caravan he retraced his steps it was with a balance of barter goods more than usually in his favour.

It is quite a pretty picture, this, of old-time romance, albeit Khadîjah was fifteen years the senior. She is sitting on the roof surrounded by her maidens, on the watch for the earliest glimpse of the caravan, when a single camel is seen approaching, the rider of which is soon recognized as Mohammed, who has ridden ahead of the caravan to bear his news as quickly as possible. And so, travel-stained, yet flushed with his first success, he is conducted up to the presence of his mistress. 'She was delighted at all she heard: but there was a charm in the dark and pensive eyes, in the noble features, and the graceful form of her assiduous agent which pleased her even

Mohammed's  
wooing.

more than her good fortune.' And when she had dismissed him with ample wages she did not forget him. Mohammed, too, was heart-whole no longer, and became melancholic and broody.

The ways of love are the same all the world over and in all times, but its etiquettes and customs vary. And in those days things in Arabia were not as they are with us to-day, nor as they are now in the East, where, by a strange irony, owing to the very system which Mohammed inaugurated, women are the mere chattels of men, and know no such liberty as that which brought him his best fortune in his young days.

For it was Khadîjah that played the first move in the game of courtship, and she played it with a woman's adroitness and discernment. Her sister was her accomplice.

'What is it, O Mohammed, which hindereth thee from marriage?'

'I have nothing in my hands wherewith I might marry,' was his very sensible reply.

'But if haply that difficulty were removed and thou wert invited to espouse

a beautiful and wealthy lady of noble birth—wouldst thou not desire to have her?’

‘And who might that be?’ said Mohammed, warming to her questions.

‘It is Khadîjah.’

‘But how might I attain unto her?’ asked Mohammed.

‘Let that be my care,’ was the reassuring answer.

That was sufficient for him, and the sister returned to Khadîjah, who then lost no time in sending an open message to Mohammed appointing a time when they should meet. Within the year they were married with Arab ceremony by Khadîjah’s aged cousin, Warakah, who blessed the union in homely Bedouin language, declaring that Mohammed was ‘a camel whose nose would not be struck.’

With Mohammed’s marriage to Khadîjah, his opportunity, if he were looking for one, would seem to have come. Free from his uncle’s patronage, freed, too, from the carping cares of straitened circumstances, or the necessity of working long hours at some small task to earn his daily bread, he had passed to a position of

ease and affluence. Henceforth he led no camels or he led his own. He was free to shape his life as he would, while his wealth and new position made him one of the leading men of Mecca.

Now, if he had great thoughts, was the time to make them known; now, if he felt disquieted about the gross idolatry of the people, was his chance to bear witness against it; now, if he wanted to revolutionize the old-world life of Mecca, he had his vantage ground from which to do so. But instead, during those fifteen years, from twenty-five to forty, so full and strenuous in the life of most men of action, Mohammed played no conspicuous part,—the years passed by, and on none did he write his name.

Rebuilding  
of the  
Kaaba.

Of many incidents recovered by Mohammedan historians in later days from the scrap-heap of small provincial history, and filled by them with portent and meaning, one at least is worth recalling. It reveals a touch of that capacity for manipulating men and circumstances which contributed so largely to Mohammed's power in later days.

When he was in his thirty-fifth year, one

of those sudden, sweeping floods to which all mountain districts are liable swept through Mecca, and struck the Kaaba, tearing a hole in the wall, damaging the contents, and imperilling the roof. To the superstitious Meccans it was a portentous omen, and they waited expectantly for some dread visitation of the wrath of the gods whose shrine had been thus desecrated. As time passed and no calamity befell them, and less superstitious, or less reverent thieves took advantage of its insecure condition to pillage the shrine and plunder the sacred relics, the leading men of Mecca met in solemn conclave and decided that the Kaaba must be rebuilt. News reached them of a Grecian ship wrecked on the Red Sea shores not very far away. The timbers of the broken ship were bought, and her Greek captain, who had some reputation as an architect, was requisitioned to direct the building. The work was entered upon with great trepidation, but when once the ruined walls had been taken down without any visitation upon the workmen or the town, the work of rebuilding was eagerly begun, and the various clans of the Koreish vied with one another for what

they began to think the gods might after all consider zeal of religion and not sacrilege.

The tribes of the Koreish were divided into four parties, to each of which one wall was assigned; stones of grey granite from the neighbouring hills were carried on the citizens' heads; soon the walls began to assume their old familiar shape, and all went harmoniously.

When the walls had grown to about four feet high, a new difficulty arose. They had reached the place where the sacred Black Stone must be masoned in, in its accustomed place, in the outside of the wall near the door. Who should have the honour of laying this heaven-given stone, revered from time immemorial by all true Arabs? It was a puzzling question and a contentious question, too, where there was no king, nor even a prince with a special genius—as, of course, all princes have—for laying stones, nor was there any sacred order of priest or patriarch to whom appeal could be made—not even a cabinet minister!

It was settled thus. As they stood beside the wall disputing for the honour, the oldest citizen arose and said:

‘O Koreish, hearken unto me! My advice is

that the man who chanceth first to enter the court of the Kaaba by yonder gate, he shall be chosen either to decide the difference among you, or himself to place the stone.'

The proposal was readily passed by acclamation, and they waited the issue. Presently Mohammed was seen approaching, and all unknowing he entered the chosen door. Calm and self-possessed he rose to the occasion. Taking off his mantle, he spread it on the ground and placed the stone thereon.

'Now,' he said, 'let one from each of your four divisions come forward and raise a corner of this mantle.'

Four chiefs approached, and, holding each a corner, raised the stone to the proper level, and Mohammed with his own hand guided it to its place.

The difficulty was solved and the walls were soon completed, and the roof put on — 'of fifteen rafters resting upon six central pillars.' The Kaaba was complete once more, though it is doubtful whether the same respect and veneration could ever again be commanded by gods who had allowed a river to break up their sanctuary, and men to handle and restore it.

New Forces  
at work in  
Mecca.

Beyond the confines of Arabia two mighty Empires were throbbing with the activities of strenuous life, and the backwaters of quiet Mecca could not remain undisturbed.

A Meccan caravan expedition penetrated into the heart of Persia with record success; the spirit of enterprise was awake, and new-world thoughts came into the old-world city. The growth of a small but influential religious party called the Hanîfahs, led by the aged Warakah, Khadîjah's cousin, had struck at the roots of idolatry, and raised the cry of 'Back to Abraham and his simple worship of the one true God.' This told of a deepening thought and growing dissatisfaction with the gross idolatry and superstition which had hitherto done duty for religion in Mecca.

By these currents Mohammed's outward life was apparently as untouched as that of any other average citizen. Professor Davidson used to say that in youth men get their visions, and see the glory of the sun upon the distant mountains of life's horizon, and the rest of life is but a following—often through the darkness — towards the light seen in

youth. If it were so with Mohammed he gave little evidence of all that was passing in his mind. He lived a domestic life with Khadîjah and a now growing family of children, of whom he was very fond. Every evening he performed idolatrous rites in his home, and he named at any rate some of his children after heathen deities. He filled his place, no doubt, as a wealthy, and therefore leading citizen of Mecca, but beyond that he was known as a retiring, thoughtful man, who preferred the seclusion and quiet of home life to the rush and scramble of the market and the rostrum.

Who would have thought that this man would mightily affect the destiny and history of the whole human race, that he would be the founder of an Empire which within a hundred years would hold sway from Cadiz to Bokhara, would annihilate the Empire of Persia and lay siege to Byzantium?

Who would have thought that twelve hundred years after, this man's name, coupled with that of the Almighty, would be invoked in prayer by just over two hundred millions of mankind, and proclaimed

from ten thousand minarets: '*There is no God but God : Mohammed is the Apostle of God*' ?

How was it? Why was it?

### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II

1. What is a blood-feud? Illustrate your answer. How far is the system good which gives rise to blood-feuds?

2. Comment on Mohammed's appearance. In what ways was it an index to his character?

3. Describe the Fair of Ukaz. What was the use of it?

4. What hope existed of the Arabs becoming a united nation?

5. How did Mohammed's marriage come about? What effect did it have upon his life?

## CHAPTER III

### THE PROPHET OF ARABIA

‘We must be as courteous to a man as to a picture, which we are willing to give the advantage of a good light.’—EMERSON.

WE come now to the event in Mohammed’s life about which there has been both the keenest investigation and bitterest controversy. Scholars have elaborated very different theories about the ‘method’ of Mohammed’s inspiration, partly because of its true importance as the crisis and turning-point of his life, and partly because men used to think that the understanding of it was the key to the reading of Mohammed’s character. Without troubling ourselves with the various conflicting theories, we shall confine ourselves to what is sufficiently difficult—brushing aside all fancies and excrescences with which the records are garnished, we shall tell as nearly as possible what happened, or at any rate give Mohammed’s account of it.

Scene on  
Mount Hira.

It was Mohammed's custom—one not uncommon in Arabia at that time—to retire for a fixed season each year to the seclusion of the rocks and ravines which encircled Mecca. One of these in particular, a cave in Mount Hira, was a favourite resort—a wild, bleak, barren spot, in harmony with troubled heart and wounded spirit. And some suras (i.e. chapters) of the Korân, almost certainly composed at this time, reveal an intensity of anguish and also a growing sense of the reality of God—the following for example :

‘BY THE RUSHING PANTING STEEDS,  
STRIKING FIRE WITH FLASHING HOOF,  
THAT SCOUR THE LAND AT EARLY MORN;  
AND, DARKENING IT WITH DUST,  
CLEFT THEREBY THE ENEMY :

VERILY MAN IS TO HIS LORD UNGRATEFUL,  
AND HE HIMSELF IS WITNESS OF IT :  
VERILY HE IS KEEN AFTER THIS WORLD'S GOOD.  
AH ! WITTETH HE NOT THAT WHEN WHAT IS IN THE  
GRAVES SHALL BE BROUGHT FORTH,  
AND THAT WHICH IS IN MEN'S BREASTS LAID BARE :—  
VERILY IN THAT DAY SHALL THE LORD BE WELL  
INFORMED OF THEM.’

To this cave Mohammed had come with his trusted wife, in his fortieth year, to

spend the month Ramadân in undisturbed meditation; in wrestling, we may believe, with his own heart, and in contemplating the eternal problem of the world's sin and sorrow. There, in the midst of prayers and supplications, the light of revelation seemed suddenly to burst upon him.

It was midnight in the cave when a glorious angel appeared first in the sky, then approached within two bow-shots' length, holding a silken cloth written all over. The angel roused him from sleep and bade him 'Read.' 'But I am not a reader,' Mohammed replied. Thrice was the injunction repeated, the third time in these words:

'READ, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD WHO CREATED,  
CREATED MAN FROM A CLOT OF BLOOD.  
READ, FOR THE LORD IS THE MOST BENEFICENT,  
HE HATH TAUGHT THE USE OF THE PEN;  
HE HATH TAUGHT MAN THAT WHICH HE KNOWETH  
NOT.'

Then Mohammed repeated the words to himself, and they were 'written upon his heart.' Then, we are told, he went to the door of the cave, and remained standing there till again there appeared his heavenly visitant, 'in the form of a man, with wings,

## 36      The Story of Islam

and with his feet upon the horizon,' and saluted him: 'Mohammed, thou art the Prophet of God, and I am Gabriel.'

Trembling and overstrung, Mohammed returned to Khadîjah, and nestling close beside her like a frightened child related what had passed.

'Cover me, cover me,' he said. 'I fear for my soul.' She covered him with a mantle and comforted him, saying:

'Rejoice: God will not put you to shame; thou art so kind to thy relations, sincere in thy words, afraid of no trouble to serve thy neighbour, supporting the poor, given to hospitality, and defending the truth.'

The visitations occurred several times, and each time they were accompanied by violent physical effects upon Mohammed. 'He was angry if anyone looked upon him: his face was covered with foam, his eyes were closed and sometimes he roared like a camel.'

Even the faithful Khadîjah began to have her fears. Demon possession is a common idea in the East. 'Could it be that her exemplary husband was the victim of the wrath of some genius of evil?' She consulted her cousin, Warakah,

the sage and *savant*. His answer was wholly satisfactory, for he exclaimed :

‘Holy ! holy ! by Him in Whose hand Warakah’s soul is, if thou has told me the truth, then the Greatest Namus (nomos = law) has come to him which also appeared to Moses, and he is the Prophet of this nation. Tell him to be content.’

Still her fears were not allayed, and a test was proposed. She reasoned thus : ‘If it is an evil spirit which visits my husband, it will not be ashamed in the presence of an unveiled woman, but if the spirit is good he will surely be too modest to remain.’ So with elaborate ritual the test was laid. Mohammed was to summon her when next his visitant appeared, and she was to take off her veil ; should the spirit depart, she would know him for a good spirit. The visitant fully vindicated himself, disappearing from Mohammed’s sight at the appearance of an unveiled woman ; he never was visible to Khadîjah. From that day onwards, through storm, and shine, darkness and light, contumely, ridicule, and persecution, Khadîjah never doubted, never wavered in complete confidence in her husband and his message.

Days of  
Darkness.

For Mohammed there were yet many searchings of heart. He found himself unable to summon his visitor, or to command hours of inspiration at his will. Three years, it is said, he waited for another revelation, staggering in uncertainty and doubt and darkness, driven sometimes to the brink of despair, saved from suicide once at least only by the intervention of his wife. Light seemed to struggle with darkness in his soul, but gradually certain grand verities stood out clear. 'God, the sole Creator, Ruler, Judge of men and angels; the hopeless wretchedness of his people sunk in darkness and idolatry; Heaven and hell, the Resurrection, Judgment, the Recompense of good and evil in the World to come.' We can gather something of the sombre realities he saw, and something of the conviction with which they came to him from some of the suras written at the time :

'THAT WHICH STRIKETH ! WHAT IS IT WHICH STRIKETH ?

AND WHAT SHALL CERTIFY THEE WHAT THE STRIKING IS ?

THE DAY ON WHICH MANKIND SHALL BE LIKE MOTHS SCATTERED ABROAD,

## The Prophet of Arabia 39

AND THE MOUNTAINS LIKE WOOL OF DIVERS COLOURS  
CARDED ;

THEN, AS FOR HIM WHOSE BALANCES ARE HEAVY, HE  
SHALL ENTER INTO BLISS ;

AND AS FOR HIM WHOSE BALANCES ARE LIGHT, THE  
PIT SHALL BE HIS DWELLING-PLACE.

AND WHAT SHALL CERTIFY THEE WHAT IS THE PIT ?  
A RAGING FIRE !'

One great eternal truth alone stood out before him, 'Lâ ilāha illâ 'llāhu.' 'There is no God but God.' Surely the discovering of this great truth raised him high above all Arabia. 'There is no God but God'—he had discovered it, it had been revealed to him—surely, surely he was the favoured one, the Prophet of God ; yes, *The Prophet of God*. It all seemed to stand together, and he set it in one sentence, 'Lâ ilāha illâ 'llāhu ; Muhammadur rasûlu 'llāh.' '*There is no God but God : Mohammed is the Apostle of God,*' and so it stood for his creed, and the creed he taught, and it stands to-day as the creed of 200,000,000 of our fellow-men.

There was another, too, besides Khadîjah who from the first followed Mohammed's fortunes with unwavering faith, a man who is truly said to have saved Islam twice. He was a personal friend of

The One  
God.

Early  
Followers of  
Mohammed.

Mohammed's, a popular but unimportant fellow-citizen of Mecca, by name Abu Bakr. Through these early trying years he was the propagandist of the new creed, and won to his friend's side the first little circle of Islam's converts. Years afterwards it was he who, as the first Caliph, took the white banner from his dying master's hands, raised it aloft again, and rallied fortunes that seemed shattered by the master's death.

With these two we must group another—a man of different type and a very different story—Zaid, a slave whom Khadîjah had bought some years before and presented to Mohammed,—this man proved himself a faithful friend in darker days.

The little group was but a poor token of the mighty armies Mohammed would ere long lead. Yet unquestionably a conviction grows infinitely the moment another believes in it; and these three did believe with all their hearts. Progress was slow at first; Mohammed wished to keep the matter as dark as possible, and those who knew of this teacher and his little band of disciples regarded them as a small secret society, more or less

harmless—after all, there were other secret societies in Arabia at that time.

In the first three years there were not more than forty converts, won chiefly by Abu Bakr's assiduous work. It is much easier to persuade people to believe in someone else than to persuade them to believe in yourself. Abu Bakr saw this, and right loyally did he play his part. These forty were mostly from the lower ranks of society, including slaves and outcasts, who found here something of a brotherhood and a fraternal generosity, if not a community of goods. As in another small society in a Grecian city five hundred years before, 'not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble' were called in those days.

Meanwhile the seasons of 'revelation' had returned, and as time went on Mohammed was able to summon them at will. Each time the visitation was accompanied, as before, by mysterious physical symptoms and weird bodily contortions. 'His countenance was troubled; he would turn deadly pale or glowing red. He would cover himself with a blanket. He fell to the ground like one intoxicated; foam

Mohammed's 'Revelations.'

would appear at his mouth ; on the coldest day the perspiration would pour from his forehead. Sometimes he would hear the coming of the revelation like the ringing of a bell.' Sometimes the inspiration would come in true dreams or 'suggestions of the heart'; more often it was Gabriel, once even it was said to be God Himself speaking to him from behind a curtain. But when it was over he spoke his 'suras' which his hearers laid to heart, and afterwards noted down, and so the Korân (or Recitation) was compiled. As a modern Asian quaintly puts it: 'The heart of Mohammed was the Sinai where he received the revelation, and his tablets of stone were the hearts of true believers.'

But as Mohammed claimed that these physical seizures which he underwent in times of revelation were evidences of the reality of his divine commission, it was natural that men's thoughts should stray in search of other explanations thereof. His friends remembered that as a boy he had some sort of fit; others recollected seizures of the kind; and men of science and learning since, unwilling to ascribe the

origin of the Korân to fits of epilepsy, have shown how in such constitutions there do lie rich but dangerous strains of high emotion, and how a hysterical disposition is not inconsistent with strength of will and a high and lofty purpose. It is an obvious danger for such a nature possessing great thoughts to become possessed by them and be carried beyond the depth where man may walk with sure and certain tread.

After three years of these intermittent revelations, and quiet work and conference with his secret society, Mohammed felt prepared to take the big step of his life,—to come out and openly declare himself the Prophet of Arabia and preach his doctrines. He was the less afraid, perhaps, to do so because he held that, except for the all-important claim of his own Prophetship, he taught no new doctrine at all. Historians and scholars since have abundantly shown that all he taught was there before, hidden, indeed, and scattered, without coherence or cohesion, but there nevertheless. Covered with fable and distorted by superstition, it was part of Arabia's sub-consciousness.

Mohammed's Public  
Avowal.

Tradition tells how the Prophet took

his stand on Al Safa, a hill outside Mecca, and summoned the Koreish. They were followed by the Meccan mob, and to the whole assembly Mohammed preached his first public sermon. The truths, indeed, awoke an echo in their hearts; they could not gainsay them. But this was not truth as a cold cinder raked out from the past and from their national consciousness, but truth living, burning,—truth on fire. They had heard of Allah before. Here was a man to whom Allah was a reality, so great a reality that there could be no other god but Him. They would not have denied that there was a life beyond the grave. Here was a man to whom God's universe was an awful fact; who, as he poured forth his invective, seemed to have himself gazed upon the flaming fires of hell; to him there was a world of difference between heaven and hell and the paths that lead to each. Then, like some unexpected cataract, he would burst into tumultuous rhapsodies charged with thrilling words of conviction and fervid aspiration, insisting again on the realities of life, the certainty of the Judgment, the peril of the soul,—the soul of one believer outweighs

all earthly kingdoms. They could no more ignore this preaching than ignore the pealing of the thunder.

Mecca was stirred to its depths. What! The Effect on Mecca. Was this man who had grown up among them indeed sent by God to overthrow their sacred Kaaba, to tell them that the gods they worshipped were no gods at all, but wood and stone? Their ancestors had worshipped these same gods for centuries before them. Had not they themselves prayed to Uzza and to Lât, and had they not instances of answers to their prayers?

Besides, if idolatry were a crime, what became of the prestige of Mecca? Where, indeed, was their own livelihood? Like the silver-smiths of Ephesus they saw the axe laid at the root of their prosperity. Mecca owed its pre-eminence above all the cities of Arabia to its guardianship of the sacred shrine. For that reason, too, it was the one city which no Arab dared attack: its people reaped a great benefit from its central mart and a rich harvest from the pilgrims, besides a heavy tribute from the tribes. It was no wonder, then, that the Prophet's denunciations of their

idols, his exposures of the grossness of their worship, lashed the Koreish into fury.

Abu Talib, now the head of the clan, expostulated, and sought to bring Mohammed to reason, and begged him to renounce the task he had undertaken, but he was obdurate. 'O, my uncle, if they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left, to force me to renounce my work, verily I would not desist therefrom until God made manifest His Cause, or I perished in the attempt.' There was no persuading a man like that, although it is recorded that in the course of the interview he burst into tears.

Something had happened in Mecca which Mecca could not hide.

### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III

1. Describe Mohammed's surroundings at the time of his first 'revelation.'
2. Give three possible explanations of Mohammed's 'inspiration.' Can all three be partly true?
3. What is the Mohammedan Creed? Can you account for Mohammed's belief in it?
4. Who were the earliest converts?
5. How did further 'revelations' come to Mohammed? Why did he claim them to be divine? When did he first publicly proclaim his message?

## CHAPTER IV

### LIFE IN MECCA

‘We would know the world—not to censure, not to boast ourselves, but that sympathy may be wider and wider.’—LYNCH.

MOHAMMED had now crossed the Rubicon. He had taken the decisive step of his career. To turn back was impossible. Islam was no longer a secret society. The issues at stake were clear both to Mohammed and to the men of Mecca, and they opposed his attack upon their shrine with a bitterness reinforced by a kind of patriotism. Mohammed himself was inviolable through the protection of Abu Talib, but an incessant petty persecution was maintained against his converts. As the opposition increased so did Mohammed’s teaching grow in positiveness, and his violent vituperations increase in fury. ‘Whoso obeyeth not God and His Prophet, to him verily is

Mohammed’s  
Position as  
Prophet in  
Mecca.

the fire of hell.' Mohammed was never meek, and when assailed and contradicted his cheeks blazed fury, while his lips poured forth a torrent of curses upon his enemies.

The advantage of secrecy during the first few years had been great; it had saved the cause from being crushed at the outset. Ridicule and contempt can more easily be borne where some hundred persons are involved. Mohammed made his public *début* not in the *rôle* of an eccentric sage but as the leader of a party, a force to be reckoned with; and soon his fame spread along every caravan route of Arabia.

Mohammed now set up with some state and dignity in a central position in the 'House of Al Arkam,' still famous throughout the Moslem world as 'The House of Islam.' The house was put at his disposal by one of his richer early converts. Here the Prophet held meetings of his followers, received enquirers, and held audiences of pilgrims and others who pressed upon him. At these audiences Mohammed played the Prophet's part to perfection; he wore a veil, and assumed a benign and patriarchal



A CAMEL MERCHANT.

*'Mohammed's fame spread  
along every caravan route  
of Arabia.'*



manner. When he shook hands he would not withdraw his first, nor would he remove his searching gaze till the other turned away. His toilet, according to all accounts, was very elaborate; every night he painted his eyebrows, and he was strongly scented with perfume. Arab-like, he allowed his hair to grow long till it fell upon his shoulders, and when it began to turn grey he dyed it. He possessed the power of winning confidence at slight acquaintance, though it is said that new converts returned often from their first audience not only with a feeling of awe and chill, but of dislike. The stories of these meetings and interviews show us the kind of rugged earnestness of the man, and at the same time the motives to which he appealed in winning men's allegiance.

One day, as he sat with the men of Mecca in the common meeting-place around the Kaaba, a certain Utba, whose younger brother had recently joined the new Faith, sat down beside him and said:

'O son of my friend, you are a man eminent both for your great qualities and for your noble birth. Although you have

Moham-  
med's  
Preaching

thrown the country into turmoil, created strife among families, outraged our gods, and taxed our forefathers and wise men with impiety and error, yet would we deal kindly with you. Listen to the offers I have to make to you, and consider whether it would not be well for you to accept them.'

Mohammed bade him speak on, and he said :

'Son of my friend, if it is wealth you seek, we will join together to give you greater riches than any man of the Koreish has possessed. If ambition move you, we will make you our chief, and do nothing save by your command. If you are under the power of an evil spirit which seems to haunt and dominate you so that you cannot shake off its yoke, then we will call in skilful physicians, and give them much gold that they may cure you.'

'Have you said all?' said Mohammed; and then, hearing that all had been said, he poured forth on his amazed listener the 41st chapter of the Korân :

'This is a revelation from the most Merciful: a book whereof the verses are distinctly explained, an Arabic Korân,

for the instruction of people who understand. . . . It is revealed unto me that your God is one God. . . . This is the disposition of the mighty, the wise God. If the Meccans withdraw from these instructions, say, I denounce unto you a sudden destruction. . . . The unbelievers say, Hearken not unto this Korân; but use vain discourse during the reading thereof, that ye may overcome the voice of the reader by your scoffs and laughter. Wherefore we will surely cause the unbelievers to taste a grievous punishment. . . . This shall be the reward of the enemies of God, namely, hell fire; therein is prepared for them an everlasting abode, as a reward for that they have wittingly rejected our signs. . . . Say, what think ye? If the Korân be from God, and ye believe not therein, who will lie under a greater error than he who dissenteth widely therefrom? . . . Is it not sufficient for thee that thy Lord is witness of all things?’

Another time we hear him preaching publicly in a different strain: ‘I know no man in the land of Arabia who can lay before his kinsfolk a more excellent offer than that which I now make to you.

Conversion  
of Ali.

I offer you the happiness of this world, and of that which is to come. God Almighty hath commanded me to call mankind unto Him. Who, therefore, among you will second me in that work, and thereby become my brother, my vice-regent, my Khalifa (successor)?'

In the audience that day was his young cousin, Ali, Abu Talib's son, whom Mohammed had adopted shortly after his marriage with Kadijah, and this sermon is said to have been the cause of his conversion.

'I, O Apostle of God, will be thy minister,' he exclaimed; 'I will knock out the teeth, tear out the eyes, rip up the bellies, and cut off the legs of all who shall dare to oppose thee.' Then in the presence of all the assembly the prophet embraced him, exclaiming, 'This is my brother, my deputy, my Khalifa: hear him and obey him.' In such manner did this Peter of Islam receive his commission.

Conversion  
of Omar.

There is one other story of this time which must be told. Its central figure is that of the man who later on succeeded Abu Bakr as second Caliph, who captured Jerusalem and Alexandria and conquered

Persia, and ruled an Empire as wide as that of Rome. He left for ever the stamp of his dauntless spirit upon Islam.

He was one of Mohammed's bitterest opponents and was engaged in elaborating a plot upon the Prophet's life, when he heard that his own brother-in-law and sister were secret converts. His wrath was aroused and he proceeded at once to their house. As he drew near he heard the low murmur of reading.

'What sound was that I heard just now?' he demanded in his rage.

'Nothing,' they replied, as many have done before and since.

'Nay,' he said with an oath, 'I hear that ye are renegades.'

'But, O Omar, may there not be truth in another religion than thine?' The argument ended in a free fight in which the woman was injured. Then at last Omar showed some signs of manhood; shamed by her bleeding head, he suggested by way of compensation that he would read the paper.

The sister persisted: 'None but the pure may touch it.'

Then Omar arose and washed himself

and took the paper ; it was the twentieth sura, and he read it. His mood completely changed, and when he had finished its perusal he said :

‘How excellent are these words and gracious.’ The brother-in-law was not slow to follow up the opportunity.

‘O Omar, I trust that the Lord hath verily set thee apart for himself in answer to his Prophet ; it was but yesterday I heard him praying thus : “Strengthen Islam, O God, by Abu Jahl or by Omar.”’ That completed the work of conversion, and Omar proceeded boldly to the house of Al Arkam and greeted Mohammed with these words :

‘Verily I testify thou art the Prophet of God.’

Filled with delight the Prophet cried aloud, ‘Allah Akbar,’ God is most great. Henceforth Omar was a staunch follower, of whom Mohammed one day said : ‘If Satan were to meet Omar, Satan would get out of his way.’

**Persecution.** So there were added to the converts men of very varying types, not outcasts only now, but men of wealth, of learning, and of social position. As Mohammed

grew stronger, opposition to him increased. At one time a price was set upon his head, and those of his followers who were not protected by influential patrons were persecuted and boycotted in the town.

Mohammed was by no means without consideration for his followers. The persecution and violence, which befell especially the slave portion of his adherents, pressed upon him heavily. In the fifth year of his teaching he advised a large party of them to seek refuge with the Christian King of Abyssinia: 'Yonder,' pointing to the west, 'lieth a country wherein no one is wronged—a land of righteousness. Depart thither and remain until it pleaseth the Lord to open your way before you.' A strange step, it seems to us, when we reflect upon the usage he and his successors meted out to Christians in a few years' time. It reads not unlike a story of Huguenot refugees of later days. The Koreish sent their envoys to beg the King not to harbour the enemies of their country, who had forsaken the religion of their fathers, and were preaching another 'different alike from ours and from that of the King.' The Moslem representatives refused to prostrate

themselves, as the custom was, saying boldly: 'By our Prophet's command we prostrate ourselves only before the one true God.'

The Koreish set forth their case. Then, with that most convincing rhetoric of simple, personal narration, the Moslems declared how they had once been idolaters till it pleased Allah to send them his message through his apostle, 'a man of noble birth and blameless life, who has shown us by infallible signs proof of his mission, and has taught us to cast away idols, and to worship the only true God. He has commanded us to abstain from all sin, to keep faith, to observe the times of fasting and prayer . . . to follow after virtue. Therefore do our enemies persecute us, and therefore have we, by our Prophet's command, sought refuge and protection in the King's country.' We are told that the King and his bishops were melted to tears. They offered the exiles a safe asylum.

Mohammed's attempted  
Compromise,  
c. 615 A.D.

In spite of the growth in the number of his followers, Mohammed was much exercised just at this time by the failure of his mission: the fate of Islam seemed to be

hanging in the balance, and once at least he allowed himself to be betrayed into the path of compromise. He was preaching one day in his accustomed place before the Kaaba, and he recited the fifty-third sura :

‘BY THE STAR WHEN IT FALLETH YOUR COMPANION ERRETH NOT, NEITHER IS HE MISLED, NOR SPEAKETH HE FROM LUST. . . . ONE TAUGHT HIM WHO IS MIGHTY IN POWER. HAVE YE CONSIDERED AL LÂT AND AL UZZA AND MANÂT, THE THIRD WITH THEM ? THESE ARE THE EXALTED MAIDENS, AND VERILY THEIR INTER-CESSION MAY BE HOPED FOR.’

The Koreish were as much delighted as astonished. This was *their* doctrine. When he ended his sura with : ‘Wherefore bow down before God and serve Him,’ the whole assembly obeyed. The new popularity, however, disquieted him, and he was man enough to see there could be no sound building upon such a compromise. Besides, too, the very heart of his message—the unity of God—was gone. Accordingly, a few days later he publicly retracted the verse, ascribing the words to Satan. Afterwards Mohammed dubbed Uzza and Lât ‘names invented by your fathers, for which Allah has given no authority.’ It was the first time, but not

the last, that he went back upon revelations which in the most solemn words he had ascribed to God Himself. But in the circumstances his recantation was the act of a strong man, and a brave one, for he knew that the storm would break out with greater fury than before. Surely, unless Mohammed found some hope in his own heart through these long years of struggle, his courage must have failed.

Death of  
Khadîjah  
and of Abu  
Talib.

In the tenth year of his mission the Prophet suffered two grievous losses in the death of his faithful wife Khadîjah, and his life-long protector Abu Talib. Mohammed is said to have tried unsuccessfully to get his dying uncle to pronounce the Islamic confession. He, therefore, was doomed to hell, and the utmost that his nephew could procure for him was that while others would be in a lake of fire, he should be only in a pool! The Prophet assured Khadîjah, on her death-bed, that she, with the Virgin Mary, Potiphar's wife, and 'Kulthum, Moses' sister,' should be with him in Paradise.

When men recover quickly from a loss, unworthy souls are all too quick to say that they don't feel it. And yet one cannot

suppress an exclamation of surprise and shame when we find that within two or three months of the death of the noble Khadîjah, the wife, friend, and adviser of Mohammed, he was married to another widow, by name Saudah, and had betrothed himself also to Ayesha, the seven-year-old child of Abu Bakr. Yet in these two months of pain and darkness and apparent hopelessness Mohammed had set forth upon an expedition which, for sheer pluck and determination, is hardly rivalled in the story of his life. A solitary man, despised and rejected in his own city, he went forth to try to plant his teaching in another. As it turned out, his choice was an unhappy one, for he was quickly mobbed and driven forth, and Taif proved in future years the last city of Arabia to hold out against the new Faith.

For six years or nearly seven Mohammed had been patiently seeking to make an impression on Mecca. A very mixed band of about a hundred converts of no particular influence was the result. There was no turn of public opinion in his favour. The outlook was dark, when a gleam of hope shot across his path.

Mohammed's  
Failure  
to impress  
Mecca.

The men of  
Yathreb.

It was the time of the yearly pilgrimage: Mohammed happened on a group of men more open-eared than those of Mecca.

He asked the city whence they came.

‘We come from Yathreb,’ they said.

‘Ah,’ said he, ‘the city of the Jews. Why not sit ye down a little with me and I will speak with you?’

In the conversation which ensued Mohammed was both learner and teacher; expounding his doctrines, he at the same time sounded the possibilities of Yathreb for his cause. The Jews, as all men knew, looked for a prophet to come; the Arab population of Yathreb were not bigoted idolaters. ‘What a different reception they would give my teaching,’ thought Mohammed, and further inquiries only strengthened his belief. ‘This man, if he could rule our quarrelling tribes, might bring us peace and wealth once more,’ so thought the men of Yathreb. For Yathreb, although it was in one of the richest valleys, and a veritable garden of Arabia, was torn with civil strife, and was plunged in poverty and distress. They were as much pleased as Mohammed.

There seemed possibilities here, but there was need of caution.

A year of uncertainty and doubt followed for Mohammed. But when at the ensuing pilgrimage he sought the spot appointed for secret conclave with his Yathreb friends, a narrow, sheltered glen not far from Mecca, his fears vanished. Twelve citizens of note and influence in Yathreb were ready there to pledge their faith to Mohammed thus :

The First  
Pledge  
of Acaba.

‘ We will not worship any but one God : we will not steal, neither will we commit adultery, nor kill our children ; we will not slander in any wise, nor will we disobey the Prophet in anything that is right.’

It was a mild pledge by the side of what Mohammed demanded later, and because there was no mention of the sword it was afterwards styled ‘ The Pledge of Women.’ But it served for the present, and Mohammed assured them :

‘ If ye fulfil the pledge, Paradise shall be your reward.’

With statesmanlike restraint Mohammed was content to wait another anxious year.

The twelve were now committed to his

cause; he could count on their zeal to propagate the new teaching and prepare Yathreb for his coming.

The Second  
Pledge of  
Acaba.

A year later, at the time of the next pilgrimage, Mohammed, without attendant, stands at the appointed trysting-place. It is midnight, for the utmost secrecy is necessary, and they assemble 'waking not the sleeper nor tarrying for the absent'; not twelve but seventy men prepared to pledge their troth this time in no doubtful words. Yathreb, they report, is honeycombed with the new teaching; a royal welcome awaits the Prophet; they were prepared to see it through.

'Our resolution is unshaken. Our lives are at the Prophet's service.' 'Stretch out thy hand, O Prophet.' And one by one, with solemn Eastern ritual, the seventy struck their hands thereon in token of their pledge.

It only remained now to remove the faithful in small parties to Yathreb, and then for the Prophet and Abu Bakr to follow with as much secrecy and as little disturbance as possible. For in the eyes of the men of Mecca this was not merely a change of residence but a transfer of

allegiance—they might even call it sedition.

Abu Bakr was eager to set off, but still the Prophet lingered, waiting, perhaps, till his followers were all gone; perhaps for some favourable omen (for he was superstitious to the last); perhaps dreading the long, toilsome, dangerous journey, or, as he said, waiting till it was revealed that the time was come. Two swift camels were bought and kept on high feed in readiness; money in portable form was prepared; a guide, accustomed to the devious tracks of the desert, was hired.

The Hegira,  
or Flight to  
Medina,  
622 A.D.

At last the night arrived. Stealing through a back window, they escaped unobserved through a southern suburb in the opposite direction to Yathreb, and after some hours' wandering, took refuge in a cave near the summit of Mount Tûr.

They lay in hiding while Mecca raised the hue and cry.

Miracles and legends cluster around that cave and hide its Prophet. Branches sprouted in the night and hemmed it in on every side, and wild pigeons lodged upon them. A spider wove its web across the entrance. Once again Islam hung in

the balance. Glancing upwards at a crevice through which the morning light began to break, Abu Bakr whispered :

‘What if one were to look through the chink and see us underneath his feet?’

‘Think not thus, Abu Bakr,’ the Prophet replied; ‘we are two, but God is in the midst, a third.’

Meanwhile scouts had been sent in every direction; but at last, opining that Mohammed had escaped towards Yathreb by the fleetness of his camel, they desisted. Then the fugitives came forth, and set out for their desert journey of four hundred miles.

They were not quite ‘out of the wood’ yet. They met a scout returning from the search. A Bedouin encampment where they sought food held elements of danger. But at length they reached the garden outskirts of Yathreb, to be known henceforth as El Medina—‘The City’—‘The City of the Prophet.’ For several days the town had been in eager and excited expectation of its illustrious visitor. Still, with his unrivalled restraint, Mohammed waited for four days to recover from the effects of his journey. On a Friday he made his state entry amid the cheers of

the populace, preached them a sermon of religious exhortation and eulogy of the new Faith, and in the midst of a circle of one hundred believers, conducted before all the people the first great Mohammedan 'Friday Service.' It was in the year of our era 622 Anno Domini, henceforth the 'First year of Islam,' the year of the 'Hegira,' or 'departure,' the Flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina.

Ten years of brave struggle, lonely leadership, and self-restraint do not diminish dignity: Mohammed rode into Medina in all things fulfilling the highest Oriental idea of the true king.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV

1. What were the advantages of keeping the Faith secret for some years? Was it right?
2. Describe Mohammed's mode of life in Mecca. Was it suitable?
3. Give an account of the conversion of some one convert.
4. Is persecution good or bad for a religion? How far did Mohammed and his followers suffer?
5. To what do you attribute Mohammed's failure to make his way at Mecca? What circumstances led to the flight to Medina? Was this flight a good thing?

## CHAPTER V

### THE UNSHEATHING OF THE SWORD

'Too oft religion has the mother been,  
Of impious act and criminal.'

LUCRETIUS.

As Al Caswa, the favourite camel, swung slowly with loose rein through the streets of Medina, allowed by her master to choose the place where he should alight, she bore him not only to a new home but to new circumstances, and to a new act in the drama of his life.

Mohammed's Claim.

There is nothing to show that Mohammed was ever a man of great foresight, or that he saw in the distance a clear, guiding star towards which he shaped his course. Indeed, the constantly changing and contradicting suras of the Korân show how his views were altered and modified from time to time. He was pre-eminently a man of the present, who understood how to deal with present circumstances and make them serve his ends. How would he act now

## Unsheathing of the Sword 67

that his chance had come? He had claimed to be a Prophet, nay *The Prophet* of God. In Mecca he had been a preacher and a warner only. Was that all it meant? The new opportunities of Medina made him face the claim.

He had started with a two-clause creed, 'There is no God but God: Mohammed is the Prophet of God.' But he lost the emphasis on God, and with that he lost his balance. 'Mohammed is the Prophet of God'—that was the clause men resisted most. That was what drove him to persecute the Jews—when he no longer needed their friendship—more harshly than he persecuted others.

Moreover, what did this claim involve? What did it mean in Medina—this city without a visible head or any central authority—to be *the Prophet* of God? What was its meaning for Mecca, where he had defied the many idols of the Kaaba? What was his relation to Arabia? What was Arabia's relation to him? Obviously 'the man who determined the fate of the Kaaba must *ipso facto* be the chief of the nation and remodel its entire structure.' Who would gainsay the Prophet of God?

First Year  
in Medina :  
Institution of  
Religious  
Observ-  
ances.

Meanwhile he must not go too fast, and so Mohammed 'with the stolid patience which in Europe belongs only to the greatest, and in Asia to everybody,' waited the year in peace—he spent it, in fact, making his own domestic arrangements, strengthening his own position, organizing the practice of the Faith. The empty plot of ground at which Al Caswa halted was bought, and upon it arose the first Mohammedan mosque. Beside it were built two cottages, one for Saudah, the wife whom he had married within a few weeks of Khadîjah's death, and the other for Ayesha, the child of Abu Bakr, only nine years of age, whom he now took as a second wife.

The mosque was the first visible centre of Islam. As it rose he built, too, the pillars of Mohammedan religious practice, on which Islam has rested ever since. Friday was established as the day of assembly when he preached himself to the people of Medina from a pulpit built of tamarisk trees, by the outside wall of the mosque. The duty of ceremonial washing (lustration as it was called) as a preliminary to prayer was enjoined, and





THE OBSERVANCE OF PRAYER.

*'Typical' of Mohammedanism in every century and in every clime.'*

## Unsheathing of the Sword 69

most typical of Mohammedanism in every century and in every clime, the observance of prayer at five stated times in the day. The prayers, accompanied by a series of four genuflections, were to be said facing originally towards Jerusalem and later towards Mecca. These prayers soon became the habit of 'the faithful.' To-day they are said in all the great mosques of the East. They are recited along every trade route of the Sahara and Soudan where the Arab drives his lonely caravan; they are used by saint and ascetic, brigand and slave-dealer alike—wherever men call themselves after the name of the Prophet.

But none of these provisions so well illustrate Mohammed's judgment and his æsthetic sense as his institution of the call to prayer by the human voice, and not by Jewish trumpet or Christian bell. It is said that the suggestion came from Omar. He communicated it to the Prophet, who cleverly replied that a special revelation to that effect had just been given him. Anyhow, the negro slave, Bilâl, was soon shouting the call from the highest turret in Medina, and the weird music of the muezzin's voice from myriads of minarets

still floats across the air from Cape Verde to Muscat, from Suez to Nankin, summoning one out of every seven of the entire human race to worship five times a day. *'God is most great! I witness that there is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Apostle of God! Come to prayer! Come to salvation! God is most great! There is no God but God!'* At dawn is added the very human reminder, *'Prayer is better than sleep!'*

Such were the religious observances of Islam, together with legal almsgiving, the duty of the jihâd, or holy war, the reconsecrating of the old Arab fasting month of Ramadân, and a few solemn feasts. Mohammed added nothing in later years except that most meritorious of acts—a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Mohammed's Followers in Mecca.

By these religious enactments the Prophet drew the faithful closer to him, and separated them from the 'unbelievers' and the 'disaffected' of Medina. Their enthusiasm for him knew no bounds. Converts struggled for the honour of washing in the water which the Prophet had used for his ablutions, and then drank it up. It was bottled and sent to new

## Unsheathing of the Sword 71

adherents as precious liquid, after the style of the relics of saints. His barber was surrounded by a crowd of eager Moslems who scrambled for Mohammed's hair and nail parings, which they preserved as charms and relics. They accepted every word of his, as he affirmed they should, as the veritable words of God. So much for the inner circle, the 'believers' in Medina.

The great majority of the people, if not actively opposed, were far from being his allies. With great astuteness and cleverness Mohammed sought to gain first one party, then another. He instituted a new kind of brotherhood, binding, with oaths of the most complete mutual allegiance, a Medinese to one of the followers who had joined him from Mecca. The tie was to supersede even the ties of kindred; one man was even to inherit from the other. The system did not last long, but it did its work by tiding over many of the difficulties of the first twelve months.

The Jews, as we have said, formed a **The Jews.** large colony in Medina, all the more influential because they were—as they have ever been—homogeneous. One of

Mohammed's first steps was to make overtures to them.

They worshipped the same God, he said, and it was 'quite simple for a Jew to obey the law of Moses and yet owe his allegiance to Mohammed!' So he poured forth suras in their favour, quoted—or misquoted—the Old Testament in his sermons, and even adopted some of their ceremonial. He finally made a formal treaty with them, declaring common cause against idolaters, and, in particular, against the Koreish of Mecca, permitting to the Jews their own religion, but insisting 'None shall go forth but with the permission of Mohammed.'

The treaty was short-lived. It was soon plain that Judaism and Islam could not go hand in hand. The Prophet rested his claims on the predictions of the Jewish Scriptures: yet he did not profess to be the Messiah;—the Messiah, he held, had already appeared in the person of Jesus, and had been rejected. He was himself another and a greater prophet also foretold in their Book. The Jews, he said, knew this; they recognized in him the promised Prophet 'as they recognized their own sons,' yet, out of jealousy and spite,

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from wilful blindness, they rejected him, as they had rejected their own Messiah. This was the position which Mohammed held. How could the Jews accept it? In a body, with but few exceptions, they rejected it. Henceforth, Islam and Judaism were no more allies. The suras suddenly changed their tone; each new revelation poured forth fresh invectives upon Israel. Jewish customs were discarded, and 'the faithful' were bidden to turn no longer to Jerusalem but to Mecca for their prayers. The rupture was a severe blow to Mohammed at the time; but he consoled himself, inasmuch as the Jews had always been a stubborn race, given to rejecting their prophets.

The first impetus had begun to expend itself. Progress was slow, though in Medina converts were still many. Indifference dulled the mass of the people; rival chieftains asserted their claims over the clans. Mohammed and his followers were often in want. Mecca, too, had settled down to its life without a regret for the one man singled out as the chosen of God. The position was not consistent with the dignity of the Prophet of God.

The  
Heathen.

Circumstances converged to show that in force lay the only remedy. Mecca must be punished, and Medina should learn that the hand of God is with His Prophet.

Marauding  
Expeditions.

The commerce of Mecca depended very largely upon the caravan expeditions which travelled twice a year to Syria, passing on their way along the Red Sea shore, not far from Medina. To break up and plunder the caravan was not a difficult and certainly was an effective way of punishing Mecca, and, incidentally, of replenishing the dwindling resources of the 'brotherhood' of believers. Some of them did, indeed, revolt against such a step, remembering how they had been taught more merciful practices at Mecca, but Mohammed was ready for them with a new revelation, reminding them that to punish those who had driven out God's Prophet was to defend the honour of God.

The earlier marauding expeditions came back with empty bags. The first found the Meccans too carefully and strongly guarded. The second, though stronger in numbers, shot one arrow and turned tail. The third was to catch a caravan at a place where the roads from Syria and

## Unsheathing of the Sword 75

Egypt meet, five days from Medina; it arrived a day too late. Mohammed decided to lead the fourth himself, but again the Meccans, knowing no doubt by this time what to expect, gave them the slip. Mohammed, however, succeeded in forming an alliance with a heathen tribe not disinclined to similar enterprise, and through whose territory the caravan route ran.

A month later news reached Mohammed that along this road would pass a very rich burden, laden on 2,500 camels, and protected by 100 armed men. This time he summoned the Medinese to his white standard, and marched forth at the head of 200 followers. But the safety of a desert caravan lies not so much in numbers as in cunning, and even this huge unwieldy caravan outwitted the highway-men and passed on its way in safety.

It was not an encouraging beginning for Moslem arms, but it brought men under the magnetic sway of Mohammed's leadership; it established Mohammed's right to drill and command the believers, and it whetted their Arabian appetites for blood and plunder.

When a man has once justified himself for highway robbery—and this was not hard for one who claimed to be the Prophet of God in Arabia in the seventh century—it was easy for him to justify worse methods. Mohammed's followers had failed before armed troops—there was still another way.

The 'Believers' break the Sacred Truce.

During the month Rejeb, all Arabia acknowledged a sacred truce, so fully recognized that caravans travelled unarmed. One of Mohammed's followers, Abdallah, was known as a desperate fanatic, who was said to have prayed that he might die fighting and be mutilated. Mohammed put this man in charge of a small force, and sent him forth during the month of Rejeb with sealed orders. These were to take no men who shrank from such a job, but with the others to lie in ambush in the gorge of Nakhla for a small, unprotected caravan of rich merchandise which was travelling without escort under cover of the sacred month. On reaching Nakhla they had not long to wait. In a short time a caravan, richly laden with wine, raisins, and leather, came through the defile. It was driven by

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four men of the Koreish, who grew alarmed and halted at the sight of armed strangers. To disperse their fears, one of Abdallah's followers shaved his head in token that they were peaceful travellers returning from a pilgrimage. The men of the caravan, at once reassured, unloaded their camels and began to prepare their evening meal. While they were doing so, Abdallah and his five stalwarts set upon them. Of those in charge of the caravan one was killed, two taken prisoners, and the fourth, leaping on his horse, escaped to Mecca. Abdallah returned with the two captives and the loot to Mohammed, who at first professed reluctance at accepting booty won by such a sacrilegious act, but soon got over his own scruples and satisfied those of the believers by distributing the booty and by giving forth a fresh revelation declaring 'it is less evil to break the sacred truce than to expel God's Prophet.'

It was a desperate business indeed, for it was a violation of the conscience of all Arabia, but it was successful. It was sanctioned by Mohammed, and it set the example and kindled the 'fire' of Islam

all down the centuries. If the truce held sacred from time immemorial by all Arabia might be violated in the name of the Prophet of God, and be so obviously successful, what might not be done? Moreover, Mohammed promptly poured forth fresh suras, promising Paradise to all who fell in war 'for God and His Prophet,' and declaring war against the infidel a main duty of the faithful. The rich spoil and splendid future were too much for the men of Medina; open opposition disappeared, the Medinese were Mohammed's followers.

The war-dogs of Islam were unloosed.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V

1. What was a sura? Were they unalterable? Should they have been unalterable? Give examples.

2. What religious observances did Mohammed institute at Medina?

3. Describe his rules for prayer. Would it be well to have rules for prayer in the Christian religion? Give reasons.

4. How did Mohammed behave to the Jews? Why have they so often been badly treated by other nations?

5. Describe one early marauding expedition. How far were such justified?

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SWORD OF ISLAM

‘The sword of Mohammed and the Korân are the most stubborn opponents of civilization, liberty, and truth the world has ever known.’—SIR WILLIAM MUIR.

It is a small step from ‘robbery under arms’ to civil war. The logical consequence of a small expedition, if it is successful, is a larger one. Mohammed soon had a chance, which it was not in him to refuse. He heard that the large caravan which had eluded him in the autumn was returning in the spring, crawling down the sea route on its way to Mecca, heavily laden with goods, to the value of 500,000 francs. Its leader was Abu Sufyan, the chief of the Koreish, and, as usual, every Meccan who could afford it had a stake in the venture. Mohammed appealed to the men of Medina, ‘Here is a caravan of the Koreish in which they have embarked much wealth. Come!

perchance the Lord will enrich you with the same.' The appeal was not in vain. With an army of 305 men and 70 camels he marched to meet it at Badr, still a halting-place on the pilgrim road from Syria to Mecca. Meanwhile, through spies or traitors, the news reached Abu Sufyan, who sent to Mecca for help. The men of Mecca, not without misgivings at making war upon their relatives, turned out for battle nearly a thousand strong. This was more than Mohammed had reckoned on, but he was not dismayed. He could count on the fiery courage of his followers, the fanaticism of his 'refugees' had destroyed all their remembrance of the ties of kindred; he reckoned, too, no doubt, on hesitation and divided councils among his foes. He was cheered in the night with visions of success, and with stern confidence he ordered the battle himself.

**Battle of  
Badr.**

The field of battle was a valley between the two most western spurs of a range of mountains which here drop into the plain which protects them from the sea. A rivulet, rising in the inland mountains, runs through the valley, and in its course a number of cisterns had been dug for the

use of travellers. Mohammed ordered all of these to be filled up, except the one nearest to the enemy, and this one he made his base of operations. He was quite aware that 'the general should not risk his life,' and, accordingly, a temporary hut was built for the Prophet beside the well, and fleet camels were picketed ready for his flight in case of sudden need.

The battle began, like many another in those parts, by single contests of the champions of either army. In these the Moslems won all along the line. It was an ominous beginning for the Koreish, and their spirits sank. It was a wild, stormy, winter day, and the rain poured in the face of the Meccan archers, as upon the hapless French at Agincourt. To Mohammed the fierce blasts that swept the valley were a legion of angels under Gabriel and Michael fighting for the believers—as the 'Great Twin Brethren' had fought for Rome at Lake Regillus. The Moslems fought, it seems, in a sort of threefold phalanx formation, and at first stood on the defensive. The Koreish were without commander, without order, or

discipline, or any concerted plan, though they were three to one.

The battle raged fiercely : at last the fiery valour of the Moslems prevailed. As the foe wavered Mohammed stooped, threw a handful of pebbles towards them, and cried : 'Confusion seize their faces.' Wavering turned into defeat, defeat into rout. The Koreish cast away their arms and fled, abandoning their camp and baggage and beasts of burden. Eagerly the Moslems followed them, slaying and taking captive all who came within reach. Forty-nine were killed, and about the same number taken prisoners. Mohammed lost only fourteen, of whom six were refugees from Medina. Many of the principal men of the Koreish were slain, among them one of Mohammed's bitterest opponents, Abu Jahl. As he lay wounded on the field Mohammed's servant ran upon him and cut off his head and carried it to his master.

'The head of the enemy of God,' exclaimed Mohammed.

'God, there is none other but He,' responded the servant, as he cast the gory head at the Prophet's feet.

‘It is more acceptable to me than the choicest camel in Arabia.’

Six of the prisoners were executed as avowed enemies of Mohammed’s creed. The remainder were treated with kindness, and most embraced the faith. A trench was dug upon the field into which the bodies of the slain were cast, and before it was filled in, Mohammed himself addressed them in the presence of his followers: ‘Have you not found the promise of your Lord to come true? Woe to you who rejected me your Prophet. Verily, my Lord’s promise to me hath been made good.’ The spoil was very rich; it was thrown into one great heap, of which Mohammed retained a fifth, and divided the rest among his followers. Two camels fell to the lot of every man in the army.

The battle of Badr was to Moslem history all, and more than all, that Hastings means in the history of England. To Mohammed, and to every man who fought under him, it was the seal of the Almighty upon the Cause. Obviously for purposes of war one Moslem was worth ten unbelievers! A course of plundering so favoured by God Himself was not to be desisted

from—each fresh marauding expedition added to the wealth of Medina and the reputation of the Prophet.

Siege of  
Medina.

Once, twice, indeed, the life of Mohammed and the cause of Islam yet hung in the balance. The Koreish, as we might guess, had not taken the defeat of Badr easily, and were resolved on revenge. A year later, with an army of 3,000 men, they marched on Medina, and so narrowly was Islam saved that we are told Mohammed was himself struck down during a panic of his followers. Two years later, summoning all their allies, the Koreish marched upon Medina and besieged it with an army 10,000 strong. But finding earthworks and trenches barring their way, and plot and stratagem met by counter-plot, their provisions ran out and they were forced to beat an ignominious retreat. Even temporary set-backs hurt little the reputation of the Prophet. He was the unquestioned master of Medina now, and each succeeding month brought fresh tribes within his suzerainty; his reputation extended wherever Arab orators contended for eloquence. But as yet he was only a local notability. Arabia still looked to

Mecca as the pivot of the country; the men of Arabia still returned to Mecca and the Kaaba for their yearly pilgrimage. Clearly, if Mohammed would rule Arabia, he must rule from Mecca. Under truce he visited his old haunts, the home of his youth and the sacred 'cube,' but he was only there on sufferance. The visit intensified the burning desire, and the urgent necessity for the Prophet of God to be Master of Mecca.

So, passing over several years studded with incident and adventure, we must follow our hero with his organized and disciplined army of 10,000 men as he marches upon Mecca. Such an army Araby has never known and the Koreish make but small show of resistance. A few fanatics keep up a running and ineffectual fight, and Mohammed stands lord of the city from which eight years before he had fled a hunted fugitive. It is still full of enemies. But the greatness of his triumph has softened his heart, and by his moderation he wins theirs. The men of Mecca give in their adhesion, and become 'believers' in a body.

Conquest of  
Mecca.

The first act of the Conqueror was one

of clemency. What was the second? Remounting his old favourite Al Caswa he rode to the Kaaba—the pictures had been removed, and Mohammed now ordered the idols to be hewn down. Uzza and Lât fell with a terrible crash, and with them crashed down the whole fabric of Arab idolatry, which has never been restored.

Mohammed was an old man now, and as he contemplated the work of destruction, he must have felt that the labour of twenty years had not been in vain.

Mecca the  
Centre of  
Islam.

To him, however, the destruction of the idols was not so much the end of the old as the beginning of the new. The Kaaba itself was left untouched, and was consecrated to be the new centre of the new faith, and from its roof Bilâl sounded the call to prayer. The keys were returned to their old keeper, and the right of attending the pilgrims was entrusted again to Mohammed's uncle Abbas.

Mecca should still be the pivot of Arabia, its sacred shrine the centre of its religion, the Koreish its guardians, but not henceforth, as in the 'days of ignorance,' a house of helpless idols, but the centre of the new religion—'God and His Prophet.'

It was the stroke of a master statesman, as well as of a religious enthusiast. It silenced the scruples of the Koreish lest Mecca should lose its position and they their chance of livelihood. It was the crowning act of Mohammed's achievement. Verily the hand of God must be with the Prophet when he could conquer Mecca and defy with impunity the ancient deities of Arabia!

So the fire of Islam was kindled in Arabia. The Subdu-  
ing of  
Arabia. A few more fierce stubborn contests yet remained, a guerilla fight with the powerful and bellicose Arab clan, the Beni Hawazin, the blockade of Taif, a powerful hostile city, and the subjugation of the Jews, and all Arabia was aflame. From Yaman and Hadramaut and Oman, from the borders of Syria and Persia, envoys poured in, bringing the allegiance of the tribes, flocking to the white standard of the Prophet. Within a year Mohammed, at the head of such an army as no Arab had ever dreamt of, consisting of 10,000 horse and 20,000 foot-men, marched northwards to the borders of Syria, and subduing the Christian and semi-Christian tribes of the north, carried the fire of Islam beyond the borders.

Busy and occupied with fighting as those last years of Mohammed's life were, his work as religious prophet was not neglected. He poured forth fresh suras as each new occasion demanded. True, they seem to have lost their old rugged earnestness now, and much of their sense of God, but he declares them still to be the revelation of the Almighty, and to have existed in heaven from the beginning of eternity. Many suras are concerned with the most trivial and unimportant matters treated in the most commonplace way. Some show his unrivalled skill in getting out of difficult personal or political situations. Some are to give 'divine authority' for his own violations of his own law, or for those actions of his which outraged even the primitive conscience of Arabia. One instance of this should be given. Within a year of his reaching Medina the Prophet greatly admired Zainab, the wife of his foster-son Zaid, and coveted her for his wife. Marriage to one who was reckoned a daughter-in-law was utterly abhorrent to the conscience of the Arabs, but he justified this by obtaining a divine commission—a divine blessing forsooth—for the act. We

have more than once seen how the Prophet fell into the very convenient habit of retracting or 'abrogating' any previous suras which he found it convenient to alter. One would have thought this would have shaken the faith of the 'believers' in the revelations, but Mohammed waved their scruples aside with a high hand, and they soon grew accustomed to such vagaries.

Interspersed among these very minor matters was much advice as to the conduct of the faith, the obligations of Moslem brotherhood, the relation of the faithful to unbelievers, to women and to slaves. Many Arabian customs were commended for adoption. There were disquisitions on criminal and civil law and punishments, on political economy and tax-collecting, and florid descriptions of the believers' Paradise and the fires of the unbelievers' Hell.

A man's age is not reckoned by his years, but by the life he has lived. The last twenty-three years of Mohammed's life had been enough to shatter the strongest of constitutions. Privation, persecution, struggle, anxiety, fear, and still more, the lust, excitement, and excesses of victory,

Mohammed's Death,  
632 A.D.

and, as he said, 'the toil of inspiration and the striking' had streaked his hair with grey, and made him old when he was sixty-three. But he was game to the end, and fought his fever inch by inch. When it was sore upon him he struggled to the mosque to lead the Friday service. Throughout Sunday he was unconscious. On the Monday he rallied so far as to be able to walk feebly into the mosque next door, where Abu Bakr led the prayers at his request. He returned exhausted by the effort, and quietly sank to rest in Ayesha's loving arms, muttering a few broken prayers for forgiveness 'for the former and the latter sins,' and exclaiming 'The blessed companionship on high!' Around him were gathered his wives and those who had been his closest friends and comrades through good report and ill—Abu Bakr, Omar, and Zaid.

We may, in fancy, stand with that little company and gaze deep into that quiet face, for thereon is written not only a life that is past, but a forecast of a history that is yet to be. Yes, Mohammed, the story of thy life is there, a story unique in glory and in shame; in glory because, rising

above thy fellows and realizing God, thou didst preach Him to men; in shame, because, being greater than thy fellows, thou didst think thyself almost a god. And in the pages of world-history thy life is written large across the nations, for, as is the prophet so are the people, and where the shepherd leads the sheep follow. And so thy life, its glory and its shame, its moral earnestness, its sordid ambitions; its rugged sincerity, its obvious self-deception; its high moral teaching, its gross sensual sins; its gentleness, its cruelty; its faithfulness, its broken oaths; its daring, its cowardice; its saintliness and its brigandage; will live again in the lives of thy followers wherever men call themselves Mohammedans.

With the passing of the Prophet, Moslem revelation is for ever closed, the last word has been said, no more is possible. At his death there can be no successor to his office as mediator and Prophet. The two assets upon which the huge and complex structure of Islam have been built are the historical records of *the Prophet's life* and *the Korân*, and it is important that we grasp the meaning of this fact. Zwemer

Mohammed claimed a final Revelation.

has described the magic of the Prophet's influence.

‘He is at once the sealer and abrogator of all former prophets and revelations. They have not only been succeeded, but also supplanted by Mohammed. No Moslem prays to him, but every Moslem daily prays for him in endless repetition. He is the only powerful intercessor in the Day of Judgment. Every detail of his early life is attributed to divine permission or command, and so the very faults of his character are his endless glory and his sign of superiority. God favoured him above all creatures. He dwells in the highest heaven, and is several degrees above Jesus in honour and station. His name is never uttered or written without the addition of a prayer. “Ya Mohammed” is the open sesame to every door of difficulty—temporal or spiritual. One hears that name in the bazaar and in the street, in the mosque and from the minaret. Sailors sing it while hoisting their sails; hammals groan it to raise a burden; the beggar howls it to obtain alms; it is the Bedouin's cry in attacking a caravan; it hushes babes to sleep, as a cradle-song; it is the pillow of the sick, and the last word of the dying; it is written on the door posts and in their hearts, as well as, since eternity, on the throne of God; it is to the devout Moslem the name above every name; grammarians can tell you how its four letters are representative of all the sciences and mysteries by their wonderful combination. The name of Mohammed is the best to give a child,

and the best to swear by for an end of all dispute in a close bargain. . . . Mohammed holds the keys of heaven and hell. No Moslem, however bad his character, will perish finally ; no unbeliever, however good his life, can be saved except through Mohammed.' <sup>1</sup>

Then there was the book, the Korân. The Korân.  
At the time of Mohammed's death the suras had never been gathered together, and no book of them existed. Many had been written down by those who heard them, some the faithful knew by heart. Soon after the Prophet's death Abu Bakr gave orders that all these should be gathered together. Zaid therefore collected all that could be found on parchment, leather, palm leaves, shoulder-blades of mutton, stones, and other materials, and with those suras which could be repeated from memory he completed the collection of Mohammed's suras in the Korân. Every word within the covers of that book was, and always has been, regarded by all Moslems as the veritable word of God, 'eternal and uncreate,' brought down from heaven by Gabriel and delivered to Mohammed. 'The whole of the contents of the Korân, from

<sup>1</sup> Zwemer, *A Challenge to Faith*, pp. 46-48.

the sublimest doctrine down to the most trivial command abrogated perhaps a week or two after it was revealed; from the passage describing the ineffableness of God down to the passage authorizing Mohammed's marriage with the divorced wife of his adopted son—all is equally, in kind and in degree, inspired, eternal, and divine.' The word of God to man was, in fact, a book,—this book. This book was the word of God.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI

1. What led to the battle of Badr? Why was it so important?
2. How came it that the Meccans failed to take Medina?
3. How was Mecca conquered? How did Mohammed manage to destroy all idols there without rousing much opposition?
4. What should you think is the effect now of keeping Mecca as the centre of Islam?
5. How was Arabia subdued?
6. How far was Mohammed's death a sequel to his life? What was his real claim as the founder of a religion?

## CHAPTER VII

### ISLAM'S SUCCESS

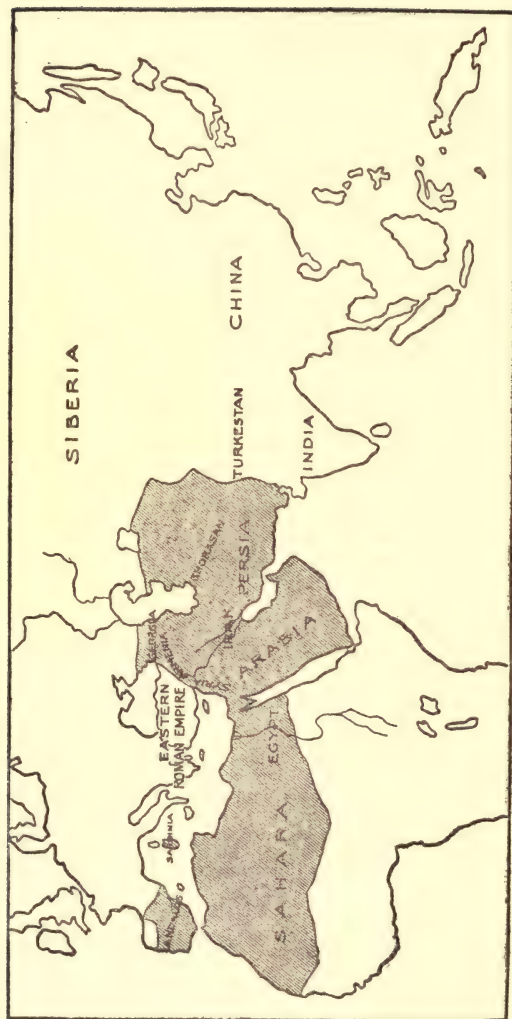
‘A poor shepherd people, roaming in its deserts unnoticed since the creation of the world: a Hero-Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe: see, the unnoticed becomes the world-notable, the small has grown world-great; within one century afterwards, Arabia is at Grenada on this hand, at Delhi on that;—glancing in valour and splendour and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world. Belief is great, life-giving.’—CARLYLE.

WE have not yet exhausted the amazing phenomena of Islam, nor have we solved its greatest riddle. We watched the orphan camel-boy grow into a man; we studied the events which made this man a giant among his fellows; we stood beside him through those long years of conflict, during which he gathered a few followers about him, and won from them a passionate devotion to his person and an unwavering faith in his cause, which made him soon the acknowledged Prophet and master of

The Wonder  
of Islam's  
Success.

Arabia. It is a wonderful story, but it is not unintelligible, and there are other stories in history not unlike it. We attribute them to that wonderful and mysterious power which we call personal magnetism. But the amazing wonder of Islam is this, that arising in the heart and mind of one single man, founded apparently upon devotion to his person, centring upon him rather than on any system that he founded (for Mohammed made no provision for a successor), it went forth to work its greatest wonders after he had gone. For a few months, indeed, Arabia wavered, the Bedouin tribes 'started aside like a broken bow' and revolted; but Abu Bakr, by a perfectly magnificent exhibition of fortitude, faith, and skill, proved that he was the successor of the Prophet, inheriting from his master that one thing which carries conviction to every Arab—*success*. United for the first time in their history, the fierce tribes of the desert poured forth to the conquest of the world. Mohammed had stamped Islam upon Arabia. His successors and their wild, earnest armies stamped Islam upon the world. With Arabia, and only Arabia, at their backs,





EXTENT OF ISLAM, A.D. 800.

*'An example in missionary enthusiasm.'*

they turned and faced the great empires of the world, and in a few years were stamping them beneath their feet. Neither the legions of the Roman Empire, nor the hosts of Chosroes, the great king of Persia, could stand before them. Like some irresistible prairie fire, Islam spread within one century over Palestine, Syria, Persia, Egypt, and Northern Africa, and from Africa it leapt across to Europe and established itself in Spain; reducing, it is calculated, 36,000 cities, towns, and castles, destroying 4000 Christian churches and replacing them with 1400 mosques.

Nor was this all. Flaming up again in the eleventh century, Islam enveloped Asia Minor and the Balkans, and most of the Great Soudan, and as though driven by some western hurricane, swept eastward over Asia across the Turkestans to China, and from Persia down the passes of the Hindu Koosh to Kashmir, Afghanistan, and India. Nor was its fire spent then. The eighteenth century and the nineteenth saw its hungry flame burst forth afresh, spreading further westward across the Great Soudan and southwards into Central Africa. The twentieth century sees Islam spreading

Progress of  
Islam from  
Eleventh  
Century.

with incredible speed, though deprived of its sword, down to Sierra Leone and Lagos in the west, up the Nile Valley and down to South Africa, threatening to engulf the native Christian churches in Uganda, Livingstonia, Nyassaland, and even in British South Africa, offering an example in missionary enthusiasm which the Church of Christ may well covet.

**Present  
Position.**

We have taken a big leap over 1200 years. We left Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, at the head of his Arab host, marching out upon the world. We find the Moslem still to-day seeking new worlds to conquer, still the same stalwart, virile enthusiast for the Faith. How is it? Whence comes this spirit? What is this spirit that is in him? Can it ever be explained? Can it ever be accounted for?

We shall have the best hope of understanding it if we go back in thought again to the battle of Badr, or join the fierce, eager armies of Abu Bakr or Omar (the second Caliph) as they go forth to war—to fight some of those battles which must ever stand among the greatest of the world's history.

(1) As we move amongst these fierce

soldiers we realize that beneath their glaring Arab faults, their hot passions, their love of fighting, their love of booty, one strong conviction holds them. They have come to believe in God : a dim consciousness of Him they had had before, now many at least of the 'believers' believe passionately, and with all their hearts, that the one Almighty God had revealed Himself through His Prophet. To believe that, knowing nothing of His mercy, His justice, and His love, is enough to make men fanatics. Every Moslem warrior felt himself to be the 'Sword of God.' Therefore, these men of the desert carried everything before them, because they had a conviction and believed in it with a faith that bore down the superstition of the pagans, the subtleties of the philosophers, and the empty controversies which, alas! had taken the place of a living faith within the Christian Church. The thunder of their cavalry was not more terrible to the enemy than the clamour of their short, sharp battle-cry and creed, 'There is no God but God: Mohammed is the Apostle of God.'

Causes of  
Success.  
(a) Belief in  
one God.

(2) But however brightly burned the Arab's zeal for God, the cause was not

(b) Plunder  
and  
Paradise.

without enticements of a very concrete and attractive nature. The prospect of plunder and Paradise played a big part. These uncivilized, simple-living Arabs were fighting against two mighty, rich, and luxurious empires. The very first battle with Persia revealed such spoils as no Arab had ever even dreamt of. And so, from the very first, the invading armies had the intoxicating hope of spoils that were greater and richer by just so much as Rome and Persia were greater and richer than Arabia. Mohammed knew the Arab heart, and instituted the plan of dividing the spoils among the soldiers; and the captured women were given to them for wives and concubines. These things acted as new wine to the Arabs. God was indeed with them! What wonder that all Arabia believed in the Prophet's doctrine of the Jihâd—the duty of fighting in the path of God—and became one huge depôt for the army of the Faith!

And Paradise. It, too, had come as a new hope to the pagan Arab—a paradise, so the Prophet painted it, where every desire of man would be fulfilled; a place of gardens and flowers and fruits, and

maidens such as never were seen, full of sensual delights that appealed to the base appetites of ribald soldiery—and its best places were for those who fell in war for the Faith. So real and so attractive was it to his warriors, that they dashed into the fight heedless whether it was plunder or Paradise that they would gain, choosing often for the latter, never doubting it one single instant. Khâlid, the famous general of the early Caliphate, spoke truly in his splendid message to the Persian general—‘A people is upon thee, loving death as thou lovest life.’

We heard Mohammed summoning Medina to the battle of Badr. He did not hesitate then to appeal to the plunder-motive, nor did the early Caliphs and their successors ever since. Mothanna, who led the Moslem soldiers against the army of Persia—their first trial of strength against the organized army of a mighty empire—‘haranguing his troops at the outset of the campaign, and, in the very first flush of religious enthusiasm, says much of plunder, captives, concubines, and forfeit lands, but not one word about Islam, God, and the Faith.’ Sir William Muir

tells the story of a Moslem soldier eighty years old who, seeing a comrade fall by his side, cried out, 'O Paradise, how close thou art beneath the arrow's point and the falchion's flash! O Hâshim, even now I see Heaven opened, and black-eyed maidens all bridally arrayed, who clasp thee in their fond embrace.' True to its formal character, Islam asks no question as to motives of 'belief.' Those who struck for God alone, or for God plus Paradise, or for Paradise and plunder without God, or for plunder pure and simple, were all the 'Blessed of the Lord,' heroes and saints, and, if they perished, martyrs in the 'path of God.'

(c) Simplicity  
of Creed and  
Practice.

(3) The simplicity of Islam was and always has been part of its charm. That simplicity is without doubt supposed rather than real; still, for the peoples whom the Moslem hosts conquered, and on whom, moreover, they imposed their Faith, it was simple enough—God and His Prophet; Islam—we must submit to God. Once that was acknowledged, the ritual of Moslem religious practice easily followed. It swept away the superstitious fears of pagan peoples, and the sectarian animosities

of feeble Christians. It made but the smallest demands upon the character of a man, and gave but the slightest curb to his passions. Then, as now, he might be bandit, assassin, adulterer, anything but a drunkard or a denier of the Prophet, and yet the best of fighting Moslems.

(4) No nation that is not utterly degenerate, whatever its government or lack thereof, whatever its divisions, is impervious to a patriotic cry that summons a nation to realize itself, to be united in one common cause and take its place among the other nations of the world. This and more than this Mohammed meant to Arabia, and Draper has showed us how quickly the Arabs passed through the various stages of intellectual and national life.<sup>1</sup> Till almost the end of the Prophet's life (632 A.D.), Arabia was an unknown and quite negligible peninsula to the civilized world. A century later (732 A.D.) the Saracens (as the Moslems came to be called), conquerors of Spain, were fighting a seven days' battle at Tours on the banks of the Loire with Charles Martel, the Frank.

(d) Patriotism of Arabs.

<sup>1</sup> *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. i.

(e) Enthusi-  
asm of a  
Great Cause.

(5) Is it suggesting another cause, or is it perhaps the sum of these four, to say that, once it was going, it was the enthusiasm of a great campaign that drove the Moslem hosts along? History has shown what this can do in lesser causes. What was it sustained the Carthaginian soldiers as they painfully followed Hannibal through the passes of the Alps? What sustained Napoleon's troops through the miseries of that Russian winter? Was it the purpose, or was it the fact that they had a purpose? Was it discipline and fear, or enthusiasm for their general's name? Before Mohammed's time, an Arab lived to drive his camel and attend his caravan. Now there was a purpose—a Divine purpose—for every Arab's life, a cause demanding all his manhood and perhaps his life. To carry the white standard of the Prophet to the limits of the world in a great and glorious campaign—that was the will of Allah!

There are few things in history more magnificent than the picture of Ugba leading his army across Syria, Egypt, Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers, Morocco, to the Atlantic shore, and urging his horse into the waves,

exclaiming, 'Great God, if I were not stopped by this raging sea, I would go on to the nations of the West, preaching the unity of Thy Name, and putting to the sword those who would not submit.'

There are few things to-day more magnificent than the zeal of the average Moslem for his Faith.

Such was the spirit that stirred in the heart of these Moslem hosts and sent them forth upon the world. The 'Method' of Islam.

Let us see these Moslems at work in the countries that they conquered. Mohammed himself was far more than a warrior, or even than a ruler—first and foremost, he had stood forth as the *Prophet*. And we shall never understand Islam if we regard it only as a battle-cry. The task which Islam set itself was more than the conquest of the nations. That might have left them Zoroastrian or Pagan, Jew or Christian still. Its task was not merely to defeat armies, but to *proclaim a creed* and win adherents to it. Therefore, as the Caliph's armies marched, conquering province after province, the inhabitants were summoned to declare their faith in Islam and to repeat the creed.

Settlement  
of Conquered  
Countries.

The *Korân* was set up as the law of the land, governing, besides questions of morality and religious ritual, all matters of politics, and government, and administration; and taxation, economy, and criminal and civil law. *Mosques* were quickly built in every city, from which the call to prayer sounded five times daily. Within a day or two of the capture of Jerusalem, Omar, the second Caliph, laid the foundation stone of the 'Mosque of Omar' upon the rock of Mount Zion. This mosque to-day marks the Moslem's possession of one of the most sacred spots of historic Christianity. *Moslem governors*, or viziers, were appointed to each province to carry out the policy of the Caliph and to collect the tribute for him. *Teachers* were sent to every country to instruct the people in the *Korân* and in the observances of the new Faith. *Magistrates* were ordered to insist that all, whether old or young, were regular in their attendance at public prayer on Fridays, and to see to the observance of the Fast of Ramadân.

The 'conversion' of simple pagan tribes under such conditions was an easy matter. The Zoroastrians of Persia were, for the most part, readily won. The invasion of

Christian states came at the time when faith was at a low ebb. Indeed, the one only worthy object of faith was almost hidden by false teaching. Therefore the Church's grip was weak. In Africa, in Arabia, in Mesopotamia, in Egypt, in Syria, and, afterwards, in Spain, whole tribes or local states abandoned Christianity for the new Faith, and even joined the ranks of the Moslem army.

Here and there small Christian states and Churches stood bravely against the rushing tide, like lonely fortresses amid a surging, hostile sea. But the old and illustrious Mediterranean citadels of the Christian faith — Carthage, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Constantinople — fell into the hands of the Moslems, and Christendom fell back to build her capitals anew on the Atlantic shores—in Gaul, Germany, Britain, and Scandinavia.

In their administration of these con-  
quered provinces the Moslems displayed  
some measure of good sense and humanity,  
though Christians and Jews who refused  
to become Moslems were by the Korân  
ordered 'to be brought low by the sword.'  
They paid tribute, and received in return

**Treatment  
of Jews and  
Christians.**

the protection of the Islamic state for themselves and for their churches.<sup>1</sup> In most provinces Christians were, however, debarred from holding civil office, everywhere they were forbidden to make converts, and Islam then, as, indeed, in many countries to-day, punished with death those who turned from the Prophet to Christ. Conditions changed with the times, and with the character of the Caliph in power. Seldom, however, were Christians left quite unmolested by the Mohammedans around; vexatious and humiliating conditions were imposed upon them, increasing more and more as time went on; pressure of many sorts was brought to bear upon them. For instance, 'Bokhara struggled desperately against the new Faith, and every Bokharan was compelled to share his dwelling with a Moslem Arab, and those who prayed and fasted like good Moslems were rewarded with money.' The position taken

<sup>1</sup> This description applies more accurately only to the early centuries of Saracen conquests, e.g. in later years the treasures of the Christian churches and monasteries of Spain were a temptation the Saracens could not refuse. And instances are common enough, even in the early centuries, of Christians persecuted—even to death—for their faith.

by the Moslem conquerors was one which offered many material enticements to those who wavered in their allegiance to the Gospel, and, as we have said, Islam never cared about a man's motives. Above all, there was the force and pressure of such a strong current of opinion, of conviction, of numbers, of obvious success, as has no parallel in history. Had not even Jerusalem fallen to the new religion?

Within a century of the Hegira, the Caliphs of Islam were not only undisputed rulers of the greatest empire the world has ever seen, but the heads of a religion numbering many million followers. Truly, they could say, the world was at their feet. The wealth of Asia, of Africa, of Europe poured into their treasury. The court of the Caliphs, first at Damascus, and then at Baghdad, was one of the most magnificent and lavish in history. Within 150 years of the Hegira, Islam had reached the zenith of its power.

The Caliphs of Baghdad especially gave their patronage to science, literature, and art; men of learning gathered round them; not only Arabian and Persian literature was exploited, but the sages of the Greeks

Rule of the  
Caliphs of  
Baghdad.

were translated into Arabic, and splendid libraries were collected. Scholars and talented translators and scribes were held in high honour. 'The ink of the doctor is equally valuable with the blood of the martyr,' it was said. While Byzantium suppressed medicine, Baghdad cultivated it. The foundation of the science of modern chemistry may be said to have been laid there by the discovery of the acids. A great college was founded and endowed in Baghdad, where it is said 6000 students, from the son of the noble to the son of the mechanic, were taught; and instruction was given in mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, alchemy, law, and medicine. Nor was it in the capital only that a new impetus was given to learning, the sciences, and art. One Caliph made a law that, wherever a mosque was built, a school should be founded beside it, and colleges and schools sprang up in the bigger cities of the empire. Spain formed a library of 600,000 volumes, and bears marks to-day of Moslem vigour, taste, and influence in what is still spoken of as 'Moorish architecture.'

But at the same time it should be

remembered that both at Baghdad and in Spain the advocates of learning were 'rationalists,' not orthodox Moslems.

The story of the magnificent pomp of the Caliphs of Baghdad in the days of its tawdry glory reads like the fairy picture of another world. Barges and boats of the most superb decoration floated on the Tigris. A tree of gold and silver stood before the palace, upon whose eighteen branches sat birds fashioned with precious stones. The walls of the palace were hung with 38,000 pieces of tapestry, a great number of which were of silk, embroidered with gold. The costly carpets on the floors were 12,000. The Caliph was surrounded by state officers and slaves. Wives, concubines, and eunuchs to the number of several thousand attended on his person. When he took the field he was guarded by 12,000 horsemen whose belts and scimitars were studded with gold.

If we could close our eyes, our memories, our knowledge, and open them on the Mediterranean sea-board in those days—no more history written, no more history

Islam's  
Opportunity.

made—looking out upon the elaborate administration of the empire and upon its splendid pomp, what a future we should have predicted! Islam had a fair field before it, if ever religion had. How in the slow march of the centuries strongly and progressively it could work out its faith! To what sublime heights could it not lead a civilized world in six centuries of time!

Has Islam  
failed?

We open our eyes again in these early years of the twentieth century, when the history of a thousand years has been written, to see whereto this thing has grown, and what its achievements on behalf of mankind. The religion of Islam has more adherents than it had; its dominion is marked by three Moslem empires: Turkey, Persia, and Morocco; it is the religion of Arabia still; its followers predominate in Egypt, in Asia Minor, in Afghanistan, in the East Indies. It numbers many millions throughout Africa, India, China, Russia, and the Philippines; but nowhere, unless it be possibly in some of the most degraded districts of pagan Africa, do Moslems stand above their fellows in enlightenment, in morality, in progress.

Has Islam, then, failed to meet men? No, it has touched man, indeed, in some of the deeper regions of his consciousness. But it has met men on their own level, and so it has left them where they were. Why? How?

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII

1. Sketch the successes of Islam for 100 years after the death of Mohammed. Why are they surprising?

2. Give the chief motives which inspired the Moslem hosts. To which of these motives do you attach most importance, and why?

3. Which of these motives are right for Christians?

4. Describe the settlement of conquered countries.

5. Give some account of Baghdad in its greatest days.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ISLAM'S FAILURE

'As we conceive God, we conceive the Universe; a being incapable of loving is incapable of being loved.'—PRINCIPAL FAIRBAIRN.

Another  
View of  
Baghdad.

BEFORE we set ourselves such questions as these, we should, perhaps, have peered a little more closely into the Caliph's palace. We might have gone round to the back door, and not to the front; we might (at the risk of our lives, though!) have watched him in his private life. We might have had an interview (if we could summon up the courage) with his ever-ready staff of state executioners, whose work was carried out at his caprice and not at the dictates of imperial justice, and have heard the tale of banquets where all the guests were murdered. We might have discovered in what fear he lived, how perilous a throne was his. Of the fifty-nine Caliphs of Baghdad, thirty-eight met violent deaths. We might have heard the confession of

Caliph Abdalrahman, who reigned for the record period of fifty years, perhaps the most splendid of all the line :

‘I have now reigned above fifty years in victory and peace, beloved of my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honours, power and pleasure have waited on my call, nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been wanting to my felicity. In this situation I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot; they amount to fourteen. O man! Place not thy confidence in this present world.’<sup>1</sup>

We might have discovered that the physicians, scientists, metaphysicians, and ‘literati,’ who, to their credit, the Caliphs drew around them, were not Moslems, but Greeks, Jews, and Persians, and even that the most enlightened of the Caliphs, heads of the religion of the Prophet, were not Mohammedans in heart, but infidels. There was much food for thought there.

However, without lingering any longer about the precincts of the Court of Baghdad, we will pursue our inquiry, asking, with all

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, vi. 29. (Frowde.)

seriousness, what, all down the centuries, have been the marks of Islam upon the countries it has conquered? What have been its fruits among the nations that adopted Islam as their faith? What are the fruits of Islam to-day?

We stand upon a pinnacle of 1200 years, looking out upon the world, and looking back upon the history of twelve centuries of Islam. Can we not find some features, so common that we may call them *characteristic features*, of Moham-medanism, which will help us in forming an estimate of the influence of Islam upon mankind?

Fruits of  
Islam.

Let us then try to bring Islam to the test, as we are able to examine its influence in this twentieth century. For after all the ultimate test of a religion must be its *continuous* fitness to elevate the faith and character of man.

Let us take, to begin with, the estimate not of a missionary enthusiast, but of a deliberately unbiassed writer in a secular magazine.<sup>1</sup> Discussing the situation in

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Review*, July 1895.

those countries where 'Islam has had a free hand,' he says :

'For centuries it had had a fair field for developing its principles and exhibiting its spirit under the most favourable circumstances of climate, soil, natural resources, geographical position, together with a variety of races, unsurpassed in Christendom in all the qualities which go to the making of capable citizens. . . . And what is the result ? Barbarism, oppression, lawlessness, corruption, cruelty, ignorance, decadence, have settled like an incurable blight on all the lands of Islam. There is no exception, not a single bright spot anywhere ; no green oasis in all that wilderness of savage desolation. And those lands were once fertile, populous and flourishing homes of the arts, of science, and of literature ! . . . What became of these rich and civilized lands under Islam ? Let the degraded, impoverished, and savage condition of Persia and the Khanites of Central Asia answer. Every vestige has disappeared of their flourishing condition before Islam invaded them. It exterminated all alien influences, gave free scope to its own spirit, and we see the result.'

As it is not possible to cover the whole field, let us take a closer look at the three Moslem empires of to-day, where Islam has for long years held undisputed sway.

First, then, let us see Islam in the

Turkish  
Empire.

Turkish Empire, ruling from Constantinople, the successor of Baghdad. What is the story of the rule of the Moslem there? Again we will consult unprejudiced witnesses. Professor Freeman, the historian, says of him :

‘ His rule during all that time has been the rule of cruelty, faithlessness, and brutal lust : it has not been government, but organized brigandage. . . . While all other nations get better, the Turk gets worse and worse.’<sup>1</sup>

Or again, Mr. Bosworth Smith, most determined of apologists of Mohammed and Mohammedanism, is forced to admit that

‘ the system of government, never an enlightened one, has, at all events since the so-called reforms of the Sultan Mahmoud, been rotten at the core. Stamboul has become an asylum for the rascality of East and West alike ; the finest peasantry in the world, the inhabitants of Asia Minor, are dying by starvation, partly, no doubt, owing to bad harvests, but still more owing to the neglect of the most ordinary precautions and duties of Government. Roads unmade, bridges broken down, mines unworked, unprincipled and exorbitant provincial Pashas, wastefulness and disorder and excessive

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman’s *The Turk in Europe*.

centralization—such is the picture which travellers give us of these fair regions of the earth, and, unfortunately, we know it to be a true picture.’<sup>1</sup>

It was this same Sultan Mahmoud who issued in 1827 a protest against the interference of the Christian Powers in the administration of the Turkish Empire, ‘the affairs of which,’ as he truly said, ‘are conducted upon the principles of sacred legislation, and all the regulations of which are strictly connected with the principles of religion.’ The unending record of massacres, and of even more vile atrocities perpetrated upon Armenian Christians within that Empire are but another witness to its degradation, and are hardly past history yet. The war has brought us terrible reminders that the Moslem is no less a Moslem for his German alliance.

Or if we turn to Persia, we find no relief Persia. from the gloom into which a survey of the history and condition of Moslem lands has plunged us. An observant traveller, after a journey across Persia, thus describes its condition :

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<sup>1</sup> Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*.

' Like a wreck, a ruin, a memory of far distant greatness, the Persian nation lies in evidence of the paralysis of Islam. There are no schools, save here and there chattering groups around a village priest, or worse than medieval groups around a mesjid and a mujtahid. The few schools of the Government in Tabriz and Teheran are chiefly opportunities for officials to eat up public revenues. Charitable institutions are practically unknown. Prisons are mere places of torture until the demanded money fine is paid. Houses of permanent detention or reformation for evil-doers do not exist. Death or payment or torture are the end of the law. The courts, half civil, half ecclesiastical, are irregular, with no written codes, no jury system, no pleading, no testimony, save the eloquence and evidence of bribes. The sects of Shiahism<sup>1</sup> riot when they please in internecine strife, plunder and murder. The attempts to imitate some of the external ways of civilization have ended in bathos. The postal system is a despair, the couriers lounging idly along the road, taking often a week to go 200 miles, while postmasters take letters from the mail when they please, and are the tools of the Government. The telegraph system is yet more of a farce. Whole sentences were omitted from our messages. The posts lie on the ground with the wires under the feet of the caravans. Telegrams are often as long on the road as letters, and the senders frequently arrive before their messages. The roads are mere

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<sup>1</sup> The Moslem sects which include the great majority of the Mohammedans of Persia.

trails. One or two were built once, but they are falling into ruin. . . . The army, with wages of two cents a day, and pay a year in arrears, tattered and sickly, is too sad a sight to be ludicrous. . . . The land lies smitten and in despair. . . . Saddest of all is the decadence of religious perception, the want of moral stamina, the prevalence of deceit, falsehood, rottenness of life, of all of which there is no stronger evidence than the throngs of dervishes, the holy men of Islam, who wander up and down the land, loathsome beyond words.' <sup>1</sup>

Of the third Mohammedan empire, Morocco. Morocco, let Hall Caine the novelist, who on occasion can go great lengths as the friend and flatterer of Islam, speak :

' Within sight of an English port and within hail of English ships, as they pass on to our Empire in the East, there is a land where the ways of life are the same to-day as they were a thousand years ago, a land wherein government is oppression, wherein law is tyranny, wherein justice is bought and sold, wherein it is a terror to be rich and a danger to be poor, wherein man may still be the slave of man, and woman is no more than a creature of lust—a reproach to Europe, a disgrace to the century, an outrage on humanity, a blight on religion ! That land is Morocco.' <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Missions and Politics in Asia*, R. E. Speer, pp. 49-50. For recent developments in Persia also see *infra*, chap. xii.

<sup>2</sup> Hall Caine in *The Scapegoat*.

Or, again, Joseph Thomson, the African explorer, who confessed that he thought favourably of Mohammedanism before he visited that country :

‘It was difficult to grasp the fact which has been gradually boring its way into our minds, that absolutely the most religious nation on the face of the earth was also the most grossly immoral. . . . Among no people are prayers so commonly heard or religious duties more rigidly attended to. Yet, side by side with it all, rapine and murder, mendacity of the most advanced type, and brutish and nameless vices exist to an extraordinary degree. From the Sultan down to the loathsome beggar, from the most learned to the most illiterate, from the man who enjoys his reputation of utmost sanctity to his openly infamous opposite, all are alike morally rotten.’

#### Arabia.

Arabia, the home of the Prophet, cradle of Islam, presents a sadder picture still. ‘The torch burns lowest nearest to the stump,’ says the Arab proverb by way of excuse. Palgrave, who has penetrated to its heart, and returned to tell the tale, sickened by the memory of sights he saw around its sacred places, burst forth in indignation :

‘When the Korân and Mecca shall have disappeared from Arabia, then, and then only, can we

seriously expect to see the Arab assume that place in the ranks of civilization from which Mohammed and his book have, more than any other individual cause, held him back.' <sup>1</sup>

It is facts such as these which give to the problem of Islam its urgent and insistent importance. One-seventh of the world is in its grip. Humanity, after all, is one great whole, and it is impossible for some races to be in this decadent condition and for all the others not to feel it. Circulation goes on fast in this modern world, with its railways, telegraphs, and telephones, its greyhound 'liners' and its aeroplanes; and the interaction of one country on another is more quickly and deeply felt. What is happening in the streets of Stamboul, and Teheran, and Morocco, must inevitably affect us, however unconsciously, in the streets of London and Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, if

Reaction of  
Moslem De-  
gradation on  
other Lands.

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave, *Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, vol. i. p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Whatever may be the rearrangement of the map of Europe and Western Asia to which the Great War will lead, it is clear already that the problem of Islam will have assumed a new importance and a new urgency. For Moslem Turkey has been courted and won in alliance by great European powers, and armed

only for selfish reasons, it is a problem which concerns us. Moreover, among the subject races of the Empire over which we rule, there are ninety and a half million Moslems,<sup>1</sup> and we have a duty to them which we can never pay until we understand them and have tried to face the problem.

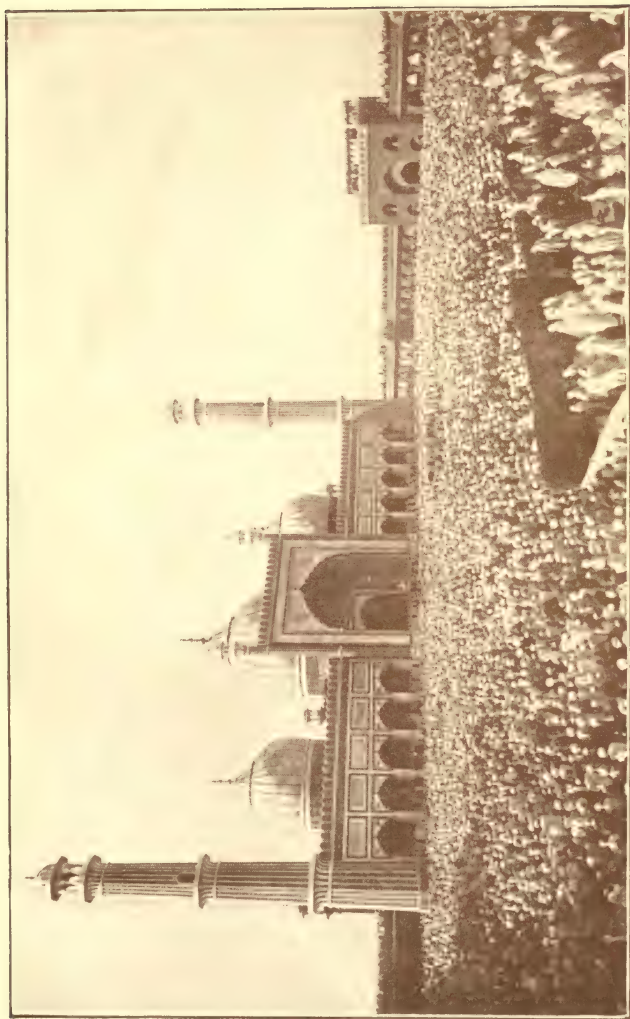
How is it, then, that a religion that began with such earnestness, that was propagated with such success, that so quickly

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and organized for their support. It has already been terribly proved that Germany feels herself unable to curb the passions she has roused—witness the wholesale massacre of Armenian Christian populations in the Turkish Empire, of which Lord Bryce, speaking in the House of Lords (on 6th October, 1915), said: 'It would seem that three-fourths or four-fifths of the whole nation has been wiped out. There is no case in history, certainly not since the time of Tamerlane, in which any crime so hideous and upon so large a scale has been recorded.'

It is clear enough that for Germany, or for us, or for any other nation, there is only one means ultimately of making the Turk a healthy influence in the world and a worthy member of the commonwealth of nations, and that is to change his heart—which indeed is the programme of the Christian Gospel.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D. King George V. has at least twenty million more Moslem than Christian subjects. Great Britain holds the highways and gateways of the Moslemworld,' and every great Moslem metropolis, save Constantinople, is under her power.



MOSLEMS IN THE GREAT MOSQUE, DELHI

*'It is a problem which concerns us . . . we have a duty to them.'*



reached such magnificent proportions, has been as a blight upon the nations upon which it fell?

We shall not satisfy ourselves unless we carry our investigation back to the source, to Mohammed and his teaching, not this time, as in our last chapter, to discover the cause of its success, but the secret of its failure.

With this in mind we ask again, 'What was the essence of Mohammed's teaching?'

I. *His teaching about God.*—There are two qualities or attributes of Allah that we have heard, in fancy, from a myriad minarets all down thirteen long centuries, proclaiming the Allah whom the Moslem worships—'God is One,' and 'God is Great.' Those are the thoughts that call the Moslem daily to worship, that make for him his idea of God. They tower above, and almost overshadow, all else that he knows of Him; they fill his mind until God becomes to him but little more than an unlovable and loveless despot. He is a God above him, but not with him, still less with him and in him. True, Moslem

Mohammed's teaching.  
1. God.

tradition teaches ninety-nine names of God, but not one brings Him near, not one calls Him Father. 'The Merciful' is again and again used of Him in the Korân, but as we listen more closely it is the mercy of a despot, not of a loving Father, which it proclaims, and there is *all* the difference.

Moreover, the Moslem's Allah is absolute *Will*, neither bound nor directed by any law of right or wrong, and in His dealings with the world there is, there can be, nothing moral. 'God,' we are told, 'misleadeth whom He willeth, and guideth aright whom He willeth,'<sup>1</sup> and, 'As for man, we have firmly fixed his fate about his neck.'<sup>2</sup> Therefore, to the Moslem there can be no true sense of sin, for what his conscience condemns may be the will of Allah,<sup>3</sup> and the only sin he can conceive is to transgress an arbitrary degree of Allah's pleasure, or deny his Prophet.

<sup>1</sup> Sura LXXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Sura XVII.

<sup>3</sup> One of the Moslem commentators on the Korân (Ibn Khaldun) says: 'Dieu a implanté le bien et le mal dans la nature humaine, ainsi qu'il l'a dit lui-même dans le Koran: la perversité et la vertu arrivent à l'âme humaine par l'inspiration de Dieu.'—French translation from the Arabic in *Notices et Extraits de la Bibliothèque Impériale de France*, vol. xix. p. 268.

Therefore, because Allah to the Moslem is not a Father, because He is not Love, He does not yearn for the love of men.

Because He is not holy, He does not yearn for men to be Godlike, holy as Himself.

So because He is not Love and Holiness, He does not seek to redeem men from sin, to draw them to Himself.

There is no bridge needed, no bridge possible, no sacrifice, no 'wall of partition' to be broken down, no Atonement, no Calvary, no thought of God sharing our life, that we may share His in holiness and love through all eternity, no Incarnation.

It is as though the Allah of the Moslem says, 'I have called you slaves'; not the words of infinite love and infinite glory, 'I have called you friends.' Islam denies, in fact, those eternal truths in which man's only hope of a redeemed life can lie—the divine life of our Lord on earth and His path through the Sacrifice of Himself, to the glory of His resurrection.

II. *His teaching about Man.*—Because the Moslem's view of God is out of focus, discoloured, distorted, and false, therefore

2. Man and Woman.  
(a) Man.

his view of man is false and out of focus too.

If God is not our Father, then we are not His children, and cannot be. If He is but an Almighty Despot, we can only be His subjects, His slaves at best. And the Korân gives man no better place than that of the highest of the living beings inhabiting the earth. No breath of God is in him, no spark that is divine. And so it came about that during his life Mohammed never taught men to think; he gave not principles, but precepts, and religion became a thing of ritual and not a religion of the heart. We have seen how Islam in its propagation sought to win men's allegiance and asked no questions as to motives. Its very religious observances are not concerned with righteousness of life. For instance, in its teaching about prayer the Korân contains the most explicit instructions about the manner of prayer, about the previous washing, about the direction, the posture, the language, the form, but there is hardly a word about its meaning or its spirit. 'In the 10,000 verses of the Korân there are not as many petitions as there are in the Lord's Prayer.'

So completely do spirituality and righteousness seem to have got divorced in the Moslem mind, that there seems nothing incongruous, at least to many Moslems, in lying, cheating, swearing, and praying almost in the same breath.<sup>1</sup>

It is not hard to understand that such (b) Woman. a God as Mohammed preached might be conceived to make a distinction between man and woman. And the blackest of all the blots which besmirch the name and memory of Mohammed was his teaching about Woman and his relations with her. True, his teaching may have been in advance of what was commonly accepted by the Arabs of his day, but he left her still the chattel and not the companion 'meet' for man. Women were to him an inferior grade of beings, whose sole destiny was to serve their husbands and be the mothers of children. Woman's honour, he said, was not to be trusted. He instituted the veil (which women in Moslem lands wear to this day to cover their faces whenever they are in the presence of men) and consigned her to the harem. He gave 'divine'

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Porter, *Five Years in Damascus*, vol. i. p. 141.

sanction to a Mohammedan to have four wives and as many concubines as he could afford, to beat them when they displeased him, and divorce them if he wished.

We do not need to follow the horrible details of Mohammed's own life, and the story of how, breaking his own law after Khadîjah's death, he had not four wives but nine. Instinctively we turn to a wholly different picture, to the story of the Life that gave Woman for ever her charter of emancipation and her place of honour. We see Him sitting weary on the side of Jacob's well, listening to and telling the sad story of a woman's sins; or accepting the offering of an alabaster box of ointment, very precious, which a woman broke upon His feet; we see Him comforting the sisters of Lazarus in the home at Bethany; and Himself comforted upon the cross by women braver than His Apostles. Were not women, too, the first to approach the tomb in the early dawn of Easter morning? Yes, something greater than the most beautiful of sentiments is written there. It has proved itself in history the secret of national greatness. For, as Dr. Fairbairn says, 'A religion that does not purify the

home cannot regenerate the race; one that depraves the home is certain to deprave humanity. Motherhood is to be sacred if manhood is to be honourable. Spoil the wife of sanctity, and for the man the sanctities of life have perished. And so it has been with Islam.'

III. *Teaching about Paradise.*—Every religion has a Heaven—a goal of some sort towards which the faithful slowly wend their way across the earthly span of human life. Each has its own 'joy set before' man, to nerve, inspire, and direct him in his earthly course, a Heaven for which he is being fitted, where he shall reach the perfection of his life. What, then, was the Heaven that Mohammed painted, towards which the Moslem sets his face?

It was little different from a glorified Arabia—a land where men still keep the lower natures which were their bondage here, where their cravings and baser appetites and passions are satisfied. That is the Heaven where the Moslem would be; no note of triumph for a hard-won victory over self, no robes washed white of all

defilement, no joyful service, for which this life was but the probation, in the presence of the King.

Revelation  
without  
Redemption.

It is enough. The causes of Islam's failure lie not far below the surface. To lift the eyes of Arabia above its poor idols was indeed something: it is something to believe and bear that witness to one God in an unbelieving world to-day. But it is not all, or nearly all. 'Dost thou believe in the one God?' 'The devils also believe,' and are devils still, although they 'tremble.' A 'revelation' without a redemption must for ever mock man. It calls him to aspire, but 'whither?' It teaches him he has a duty, but what? As one of our great administrators of a Moslem land has said: 'Islam may mean progress, but certainly it is progress up a blind alley.' Man can only raise his ladder on this earth, and though he climb a little, it will not reach to Heaven.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII

1. What has been the past effect of Mohammedan rule in the Turkish Empire? What is the present position?

2. What was the condition of Persia in 1895 ?
3. Account for the fact that degradation in Moslem lands reacts upon Britain. Illustrate from Morocco.
4. What does Mohammed teach about God ?
5. What position does Mohammed assign to man, and what to woman ?
6. Contrast the Moslem idea of Paradise with that of the Christian.
7. What seem to you the most striking points of contrast between Islam and Christianity ?

## CHAPTER IX

### 'THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM'

'Man's part  
Is plain, to send love forth, astray, perhaps,  
No matter :—He has done his part.'

ROBERT BROWNING.

IF this book has carried its readers along any distance at all they will have recognized two facts: Islam's tremendous power, not only as a sword, but as a creed, and Islam's failure to lift nations and men up to a higher life.

There is one truth yet which we must face, and perhaps we shall see its meaning best if we turn it into parable.

**A Parable.**

There was a great university once that numbered many teachers and a myriad scholars. The teachers were, for the most part, wise and good and apt to teach, but the wisest would confess that there was much he did not know, whole realms of knowledge he had never seen. Their teachings varied very greatly; but most of the

wisest and best agreed in foretelling a Teacher to come, wiser and truer than them all, teaching not as they from their own little corners of the truth, but gathering up, as it were, the light of their shaded and coloured lanterns into the white light of a glorious sun. So they foretold Him, and so He came. And when He taught, the scholars said: ‘Did ever man speak like this Man?’ and as they read His life they saw the Truth in practice. Men were no more just creatures of this earth: they had come from God, and God had come from Heaven to win them back to Himself.

The good and the wise teachers of the university then no longer pointed on to the One Who should come: rather they took up His words and His life, taught them and expounded them, and ever found new meaning and new teaching there, and pointed ever up to Him.

Till at last there arose another teacher, who, learning something of what the Great Teacher had taught, began to think that because he knew a little he was all-wise—yes, even wiser than He. Men gathered to listen to his teaching. And what did he proclaim? Something of the truths of

the Great Teacher, with a difference. And what was that difference? No thoughtful man has ever yet been found to maintain that his teaching was more sublime, *but it was easier*.

Had the Great Teacher taught that there was one God? So did he—the later teacher—but his God was more of a despot than a Father.

Had the Great Teacher taught a Heaven of spiritual life? He promised a Heaven too, but one of carnal pleasure.

Had the Great Teacher taught men to worship in spirit and in truth? He taught prayer, but he added that a prayer at Mecca was worth more than elsewhere.

Had the Great Teacher taught men to pray without ceasing? He taught men to pray five times a day.

Had the Great Teacher called men to be pure in heart? He made provision for men unwilling to be pure.

Had the Great Teacher raised Woman's position? He gave her certain rights over property, but no honour.

Had the Great Teacher sent his followers out to preach the kingdom and heal the sick? He sent his followers on

## ‘The Challenge of Islam’ 139

a similar errand, by the method of raiding caravans.

Had the Great Teacher taught men to rule their bodies? He only forbade his followers to take strong drink.

The Great Teacher had bidden men, ‘Love your enemies.’ He instituted a brotherhood embracing ‘believers.’

The Great Teacher had sought men’s hearts. He was content with a confession of belief.

The Great Teacher had taught principles. He left precepts for the guidance of his followers.

The Great Teacher had been tempted as all men are tempted, but had never faltered, never stumbled, never failed. The later teacher claimed a ‘divine’ indulgence for his sins.

The Great Teacher suffered and laid down His life for men—the other decreed that his dominion should be extended by the sword.

Islam is the one religion which throws down a challenge to the Gospel; others came before and knew not the Christ. Mohammed alone of all religious teachers has measured himself beside the holy JESUS,

**Moham-  
med’s Claim  
to supersede  
Christ.**

and, coming after Him, *claims to supersede Him*. That is Islam's challenge to the Church of Christ to-day.

The  
Crusades.

That challenge, if not in its full meaning, at least in its terror, was a very real and threatening thing to European Christendom in its early centuries, when Saracens and Turks had almost surrounded the Mediterranean, had conquered Spain, threatened France, sacked Moscow, and held Damascus and Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Olivet. And Christendom took up the gauntlet. If Islam attested its right by its conquests, so then would the Church. And the Christian countries of Europe poured forth their earnest, ignorant rabble and the glory of their chivalry, with crosses on their sword-hilts, and banners with '*Dieu le veult*' floating above them, to the Holy War, to recover Jerusalem from the Turks. Hundreds of thousands of the nobility and yeomen of Europe laid down their lives with a feverish zeal in each Crusade, and a long and ghastly line of bones whitened the roads through Hungary to the East.

The Crusades present at once one of the grandest pictures of misguided zeal,

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and one of the blackest crimes in history; for they were the very denial of the Gospel for which they contended, and the arms of Christian knights were stained with acts of barbarity and cruelty more heathenish than those of their Turkish foes. Christendom was repulsed, fighting with the Moslem weapon, and it seemed to many as though the Church had tried in vain her *only* weapon—the weapon of force. Popes there were, and monks and priests, and those who should have been the shepherds of the flock, yet none saw that the Church had cast aside the one method that never fails.

The Turks were true to their religion, and were following the example and teaching of Mohammed, when they took the sword; the Crusaders claimed to be followers of Him Who said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight’; ‘Love your enemies’; of Whose life it is written that ‘He went about doing good,’ and Whose disciples learnt and learnt out their Master’s lesson—‘Love never faileth. The greatest of these is love.’

Did we say *none* saw it? Yes, there

were just a few, a mere handful. For God never leaves Himself without witness. But there was one—for all that history tells us—who had the courage of his faith.

Raymund  
Lull.

The son of a Christian knight and noble in the Spanish island of Majorca, Raymund Lull 'is acknowledged by all writers on the history of missions to be the main connecting link between the apostles of Northern Europe and the leaders who followed the Reformation.' Read the story of the thirteenth century in Europe, and realize the days in which he lived. The spirit of the Crusades is still alive, the conflict between Islam and Christian Europe is still raging. Tales of knightly purity shine out from a background of gross sensuality, and hymns of devotion are written in strange contrast to Bacchanalian revel songs. The world-power of Rome is declining, the general state of morals, even among popes and clergy, is very low; superstition is rife. The Inquisition has just come into play.

Towering high above his day, like some unexpected mountain peak soaring above an unbroken land of stagnant marsh, stands the figure of this man, Raymund Lull, who

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dared to believe in love, to preach love, to live love.

He was brought up in luxury and ease 1. Early Life. amid the splendour of the Spanish court, ‘popular in the world, a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God.’ ‘He had everything this world could give him: brilliant, versatile, splendidly successful; knight, poet, musician, scholar, nobleman, courtier, gallant.’ So, till he was in his thirty-second year. To him, then, there came the vision of Christ crucified. In the light of that Cross the glories of this world faded, and a new glory entered his life. The Turkish question lay heavy on his soul; and, full of a great longing towards the Turks, he desired to ‘conquer’ the Holy Land. But here was his proposal which he boldly set forth to the astonished Crusade-going, Turk-hating Church:

‘I see many knights going to the Holy Land beyond the seas, and thinking that they can acquire it by force of arms; but in the end all are destroyed before they attain that which they think to have. *Whence it seems to me that the conquest of the Holy Land ought not to be attempted except in the way in which Thou and Thine Apostles acquired it, namely, by love and prayers and the pouring out of tears and blood.*’

This marvellous man was, indeed, a missionary of the most up-to-date kind. Nine years of preparation he gave himself, mastering Arabic, studying and writing on Christian philosophy, learning geography, the pioneer 500 years before his day of twentieth-century missionary study! And all this with scarcely a friend who believed that his missionary call was anything more than a piece of chimerical fanaticism!

2. Service. Long years of hard and lonely service followed, preaching to Moslems, holding friendly discussions with them, writing Christian pamphlets for them, then standing before the leaders of the Roman Church—popes and kings and councils, lecturing before universities on behalf of the Moslem world and the new crusade of love, alternately missionary and missionary deputation! Looking back over these years, he said:

‘I had a wife and children; I was tolerably rich; I led a secular life. All these things I cheerfully resigned for the sake of promoting the common good and diffusing abroad the common faith. I learned Arabic. I have several times gone abroad to preach the Gospel to the Saracens. I have, for the sake of the faith, been cast into prison and scourged. I have laboured for forty-five years to

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gain over the shepherds of the Church and the princes of Europe to the common good of Christendom. Now I am old and poor, but still I am intent on the same object. I will persevere in it till death, if the Lord permits it.’

Like some young man, full of the burning fire of a fresh enthusiasm, he sets out for Africa at the age of fifty-six. Yet, like that same young man, he is very human. And it seems to bring Lull very near us when we read that at the last, as his ship was about to cast loose from Genoa, his courage fails and the ship sails without him. ‘The agony that his soul was suffering oppressed his body, out of measure even unto death, so much so that his friends carried him away from a second ship in which he had embarked, certain that his life could not last out the voyage. News of yet a third ship was brought, and he finally determined to push forward. From that moment, he tells us, he “was a new man.”’

In North Africa he remains two years, 3. Death disputing, winning, shepherding; is imprisoned, sentenced to death, and finally banished. But only to fresh labour. Much has yet to be filled in to the closing years

of this long, hard life. He is preaching in Crete, he is exhorting Christians in Armenia, he is back in Africa again, he is shipwrecked on the coast of Italy, then back again in Bugia, in North Africa, where at last a raging mob drags him, like Stephen, outside the city wall and stones him to death on June 30th, 1315.

‘ The Son of God goes forth to war,  
A kingly crown to gain ;  
His blood-red banner streams afar ;  
Who follows in His train ?

Who best can drink His cup of woe,  
Triumphant over pain ;  
Who patient bears His cross below,—  
He follows in His train.

They climb’d the steep ascent of heaven  
Through peril, toil, and pain :  
O God, to us may grace be given  
To follow in their train ! ’

Comparison  
of Lull’s  
Methods  
with those  
of the  
Crusaders.

We look back now across nearly twelve centuries to that scene in North Africa: the old, worn-out man preaching, striving, agonizing, praying, loving to the last, stoned by the hands of the Moslems he loved, leaving behind him a few scattered converts

here and there, a number of learned treatises since gone out of date, a Church still heedless of his call, and not one friend to follow him.

Then we turn our eyes to the countries on the other side of the Mediterranean, and think again of the First Crusade, where half a million men poured out their lives to recover Jerusalem, only to have it wrested from their hands again; or to the Crusade of splendour led by Richard of the Lion Heart to ignominious failure. We think of the new ‘machine’ the Church was then inventing for the heretic and Turk—the Inquisition. Who, then, had found the better way? Which was the right path? Which had found the true solution of the problem of Islam? Which had found the true answer to Islam’s challenge—dauntless Crusader, arrogant Pope, or this man with the fire and the devotion of a Crusader, but with a brother’s love for the Moslem?

We listen to him again to-day. His message has not gone out of date, and never will. He has left us the motto of his life:

‘HE WHO LOVES NOT, LIVES NOT, AND HE WHO LIVES BY THE LIFE CAN NEVER DIE.’

He might have lived in this twentieth century when he wrote the following prayer with which he closes one of his books :

‘ Lord of heaven, Father of all times, when Thou didst send Thy Son to take upon Him human nature, He and His Apostles lived in outward peace with Jews, Pharisees, and other men. . . . And so, after Thy example, should Christians conduct themselves to Moslems ; but since that ardour of devotion which glowed in Apostles and holy men of old no longer inspires us, love and devotion through almost all the world have grown cold, and, therefore, do Christians expend their efforts far more in the outward than in the spiritual conflict.’

#### QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER IX

1. Contrast the teaching of Christ and Mohammed, as worked out in the parable.
2. By what methods did Mohammed’s followers spread their religion ?
3. By what methods did the Crusaders seek to withstand the Mohammedans ? Illustrate your answer, showing how far a Crusader’s life was noble.
4. By what methods did Raymund Lull seek to withstand Islam ? Illustrate your answer.
5. What was the motto of Lull’s life ? Describe his setting out from Genoa on his mission to Africa at the age of fifty-six ? How and where did he die ?

## CHAPTER X

### THE WORLD OF ISLAM

‘The tide of things rolls forward, surge on surge,  
Bringing the blessed hour  
When in Himself the God of Love shall merge  
The God of will and power.’

WHERE was the fruit of Raymund Lull's life, and the answer to his prayer? His call to the Christian Church fell on deaf or unwilling ears, and his prayer seemed to have been in vain. He left no followers in his Crusade of Love; none caught his spirit or sought his task. One or two short, fitful efforts by men like Francis Xavier and his earnest Jesuits, who stood alone in love and piety, is all that we can trace in the Church's history of the survival of Lull's spirit and Lull's mission as the long centuries pass on from the darkness of the Middle Ages to the light of modern times.

The Fruit of  
Lull's Life.

To find the fruit and the answer we must take a leap of five centuries from

the time of Raymund Lull's death, landing in the opening years of the nineteenth century. The spirit of Raymund Lull was now born anew in Christendom, and the spirit of the *new* Crusade—the Crusade of Love—was growing in the Church. The Moslem needed something better than he had! The Moslem was worth winning! The Moslem was included in the world to which the Church was bidden to go! The Church, the body of Christ, could never be complete until the Turk was won!

It would be slow work. Then so much the more reason for not wasting time! It was dangerous work. What had that to do with it? It was difficult work. Then so much the more were brave hearts zealous to share in it!

These thoughts came slowly and gradually with compelling force to just a few here and there as the years rolled on. And the nineteenth century gave its long thin line of knights to the new Crusade of Love. They were the advance guard of the new army, and right bravely did they do their work. No Moslems wanted them, no Government encouraged them,

few even protected them, most of the great Moslem countries were shut and barred and bolted against them.<sup>1</sup>

They took their lives in their hands, they spent long years in study, they mastered the hardest languages in the world and harnessed them for the Gospel, translating the Bible and providing Christian literature. They prayed open doors that were closed, they quietly stole through any that were ajar. Some willingly laid down their lives, more sacrificed their health, all faced lives of apparent failure, confident that in the end the cause of love must triumph.

This era of modern Moslem missions is but another evidence, perhaps the strongest of all, of the spirit to which, in this last hundred years, most wonderful of all in history, Christian men and women have opened their hearts.

The Spirit  
of Christ in  
the 19th  
Century.

The spirit that stopped the slave trade, that reformed our prisons, that regulated our factories, that multiplied our hospitals,

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that the early Church 'for three hundred years had all the Governments of the world and all the Courts of Justice against her.' Yet these were the days of the Church's greatest vigour!

that sent Livingstone to Africa, Coleridge Patteson to the South Seas, and Selwyn to New Zealand, that inspired Barnardo and General Booth, that nerves thousands of workers in the slums of our great cities, is the same spirit that impels Christian missionaries forth to the Moslem world to-day.

And what is this spirit? May we not dare to say that it is born of a new understanding of a Life lived among the hills and valleys of Galilee, and a Cross raised on a lonely hill outside Jerusalem nineteen centuries ago? There, at the centre of world-history, men learned to look up into the face of God and say 'Our Father,' and then look out upon mankind and call them 'brothers,' and gazing on that Cross see there the World's Redemption, the Son of God lifted up that He might draw all men to Himself. Every dark corner of the earth, every place of pain and sickness, every haunt of sin and shame, every falsehood and every half-truth seen in that light is but a challenge to the Christian, to lift up Him Who is the Lord of Life and Light and Glory, to catch His Spirit that He may be once more incarnate in the Life of His Church.

So it has been for very many of us in the Great War. It has seemed that so many of the things He died for are at stake—liberty and love and gentleness and the sympathy that appreciates the aspirations of other peoples. And our men and women too have gladly given their lives and yielded of their best that the eternal things might win through and that other generations may live in a better world.

And when peace comes to us again, the same call will be there—less strident but no less urgent—summoning every true man to give his life for the world's cleansing, to follow as he may the great Redeemer, who redeemed men by His cross. The ultimate test of Englishmen will be those years of peace. Will there then be a great uprising to the truly holy war of love and unselfish service and the great adventure of the Cross—the war against sin and injustice, against social and national wrong, the war for love and truth and purity and the kingdom of Jesus Christ?

Meanwhile in these opening years of the twentieth century, away in the Far East nations great and ancient are awakening to

**Awakening  
of the East.**

take part in the life of the world. The Renaissance of Europe in the fifteenth century is dwarfed by the Renaissance of Asia to-day. Japan has claimed a place beside the European peoples in the comity of nations, and has justified her claim. China, awakening from the sleep of ages, claims it too. India—our own Empire, torn by dissensions under many masters in the past—is in the throes of upheaval and unrest. This rising national spirit in the heart of the Eastern nations, of China, Japan, Korea, and India, is a challenge to Christendom. But it is far more. With its lofty, national aspirations it offers to the Church of Christ a greater opportunity than any in history.

**The Problem  
of Islam.**

Among all these insistent problems, the problem of Islam is this: That in this modern world of renaissance, reform, movement, and progress, one-seventh of mankind turns to one physical and spiritual centre, a black stone in the Kaaba at Mecca, a city of the past. In that holy city, alas! notorious the world over for its sin and wickedness,<sup>1</sup> pilgrims meet from half the

<sup>1</sup> An Arabic proverb is common throughout Persia which sadly epitomizes the influence of Mecca. It is as

races of the earth—Tartars and Malays, Russians and Negroes, Indians and Chinese, Arabs, Afghans, Persians, Egyptians, and many more. All this crowd of races, peoples, nationalities, and tongues own one Faith. For all, the limit of aspiration, of morals, of spirituality, was cast hard, fast, unchangeable, in the life of the Prophet and his book in the sixth century of Arabia.

From the far-off Celebes Islands in the East to Rio de Oro, on the Atlantic shore of Africa; from Russia, even from European Russia, in the North down to the British Protectorates of South Africa, that huge Moslem world spreads out like some great octopus, and its peoples turn themselves inwards, westwards, eastwards, southwards, northwards, as they prostrate themselves in prayer towards Mecca, the historic centre of the Faith.<sup>1</sup>

Away in the furthest East the muezzin **East Indies.** ushers in the new world's day in the great

follows: 'If your friend has been to Mecca, trust him not. If he has been there twice, avoid him. If he has made the pilgrimage three times, then flee from him as you would from Satan himself.'

<sup>1</sup> The reader is recommended to keep the map (on pp. 200-1) open while reading this chapter.

luxuriant islands of the East Indies, where, whilst Europe was occupied with the Reformation, Mohammedan traders settled among the simple pagans, winning them to Islam. To-day, in the islands of Celebes, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, and the Straits Settlements, thirty million Moslems of Malay race recite with one accord the creed of Allah and His Prophet.

China.

A few hours later, in the western provinces of China, eight million Moslems are summoned from sleep to prayer. These Chinese Moslems have never been under Moslem rule, nor are they by any means the fanatics we have got to know so well in lands where Islam holds undisputed sway. They are Chinese first and Moslems after, wearing the queue, concurring in many Confucian rites, and joining in ancestral worship, a witness to the power of Islam where it never drew sword or held the sceptre.

India.

Hear, next, the voice of India's sixty-six million Moslems, who, amid the confusion of worship of countless idols, acknowledge with no uncertain sound the one God and His Prophet, and in stately mosque and crowded bazaar and lonely

field spread themselves in prayer towards the sacred city. These Moslems<sup>1</sup> are successors of the great warriors who ruled and conquered India through a thousand years — men like Mohammed Kasim (711 A.D.), Mahmud of Ghazni (1019 A.D.), Jenghis Khan (1221 A.D.), Timur (1398 A.D.), and Mogul rulers, such as Akbar, Shah Jehan, and Aurungzeb. They are among the most loyal of our British fellow-subjects, but have never stood in India for the cause of enlightenment or progress up to the present time. They are in the mass far more illiterate than their Hindu compatriots; they are in an undue minority in the schools. The Moslem farmer is thriftless, and in debt to the Hindu money-lender. The Mohammedan population stolidly oppose all the efforts of the Government to stay the ravages of

<sup>1</sup> Kashmir and the North-West Frontier Province are Moslem almost to a man; the hardy races of the Punjab are predominantly Moslem; the whole of that huge stretch called the United Provinces, with its old Mohammedan citadels and mosques, is still the intellectual centre of Indian Mohammedanism. Calcutta, and the dense network of villages of Bengal, contain twenty-five million professed Moslems. In Bombay one-fifth of the people are Mohammedans. During recent years Mohammedanism has still been spreading in India.

bubonic plague. Purity in the home and personal life is more rare than among Hindus. Five times a day the muezzin calls one-fifth of India to recite the creed—the creed without a Saviour.

Afghanistan  
Baluchistan.

Through the great historic passes of the North Indian mountains file down to-day the Afghans and Baluchis, warriors by nature, but in the Pax Britannica merchants with their caravans. These wild and warlike people in their mountain fastnesses know none other than Mohammed, consecrate their matchlocks to his service, and ask the blessing of Allah on their raids. In these rocky uplands every man prays Meccaward, and the dead face Mecca in their graves.

Central  
Asia.

On, into Central Asia, that great tableland, 'the roof of the world,' where three empires meet. In Bokhara, a centre of Moslem influence and learning for all Central Asia, and in Turkestan, almost wholly Moslem, the faithful spread their prayer-mats towards the south.

We are on the borders of Europe now, but not at the limit of Islam. Among the scattered peoples of the 'Steppes' and beyond in Europe to the very boundary of

Siberia, 'where the winter day is so short that the Moslem can hardly find time to pray all his stated prayers,' still the Prophet of Arabia is acclaimed by eighteen million Moslems scattered among a nominally Christian people. The voices of those who in this vast tract worship JESUS rise but faintly to our ears.

Westward again: and we stand in the vast land of Persia, among the ruins of world-empire, once the home of the worshippers of the sun, and of the hosts of heaven. Persia now turns its back to the rising sun and its face towards Mecca. The Shah, the officers of state, the law, the people, are Moslem, and have been for twelve centuries; in Persia, as in Arabia, the great closed land, Islam has reigned alone.

Across the Euphrates Valley, past the cities of Babylon and Nineveh, whose names are the only relics of their former greatness, and we stand among the Moslem countries bordering the Mediterranean on the north-east, ruled with iron hand according to Korânic Law by the Sultan of Turkey, from Constantinople, the queenly city of the Golden Horn, political

**Turkish  
Empire.**

centre of the Moslem world. Here, in Asia Minor and Syria, in the historic cities where the Apostle of the Gentiles loved, prayed, laboured, and suffered, and in which he planted Christian Churches, the muezzin's voice is heard to-day. Great Moslem populations proclaiming their simple, confident creed almost drown the feeble praise of the few dispirited Christians, remnant of Churches that have been.

Palestine, now swept within the Turkish Empire, re-echoes the hard rasp of the Moslem creed and shrinks beneath the pressure of the Moslem heel. Strange that within the Empire of the Turk, the Empire which in the past has stood for oppression and persecution, should lie the land that once cradled the Saviour of the world. Stranger still and far more tragic, that on the hills which JESUS trod, around the lake He loved, and in the villages which heard His words of Life and Light and Truth, His Name is almost forgotten, dishonoured by the name that denies His claim.

The Bedouin Arab with his camel or his herd of goats camps unthinking upon the sacred sites. Bethlehem, Nazareth,





A CHALLENGE FROM WEST AFRICA.

*'Where Moslem mosque and pagan temple  
are side by side.'*

Cana, Capernaum, Calvary, Olivet mean nothing to him. He spreads his prayer-mat towards Mecca and invokes Mohammed.

We have traversed Asia from the farthest East, and the voice of the muezzin has haunted our ears. But we have not finished yet.

Africa lies before us, the land of trackless **Africa.** deserts, overpowering forests, pestiferous marshes, vast inland seas.

It is the continent of pagan races, negro and Bantu crowding in mud-built towns or scattered in countless villages on the river banks. No stately temples of sculptured marble enshrine their pagan gods; weird sacred trees, fetishes, sacred stones take their place.

The pagan continent—is it so indeed? What means, then, the muezzin call from Cape to Cairo, from Lagos to Zanzibar? Whence come fanatic Moslems facing eastward and northward in the old strongholds of Christian Churches in North Africa and Egypt, in the heart of the Sahara, in the great, walled cities of Sokoto, in the vast bush lands of West Africa, where Moslem mosque and pagan temple are side by side? Down through central,

pagan Africa, the land where Livingstone's heart still lies, we find the Moslem convert where ten years ago Mohammed was not known. Pagan Africa! its paganism fades into the past, and it fades before the crescent, not the Cross.

**Urgent  
Problems.**

That is the problem of Africa, and it is the problem of to-day. What is to be the future of this great continent? The land is in trust to the powers of Europe, Christian by name. They must decide its fate. Is the simple, laughing savage, clinging so feebly to his poor superstition, to be gripped by the iron hand of this Islam we have studied, or shall his feet be set upon the path which has no limit but the purity, the love, the holiness of God? Twelve centuries ago the Christian citadels of North Africa were wrested from the Christian Church and they have never been recovered. Islam has rolled across the great Soudan and in the last fifty years has broken through into the Southern Continent. In the last ten years it has spread down the Niger river, passing little Christian churches on the way, across the old West African Protectorates, and out to the sea, building its tiny mosques in

heathen villages, teaching its short, simple creed, steeling the African against the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

One-third of Africa is Moslem. The next twenty-five years must largely decide the fate of the rest.

How has it come to pass? Not by the sword, for Europe has ordered the sword to be sheathed. Not by the prestige of Moslem government, for the great bulk of Africa is under European rule, which professes to treat all religions alike.

The Moslem trader, confident, earnest, and proud, sitting at rest in the market of a neighbouring village, on the long march of a caravan, on the ship that bears him up and down the Nile, in the streets of the great coast towns, boldly acknowledges Allah and His Prophet. He feels no qualms for any inconsistency in his life, nor is his message weakened thereby. The simple pagan, whose ancient superstitions are already rudely shattered by advancing civilization, eagerly grasps at

Moslem  
Propaganda  
in Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Speaking at the Lagos Church Synod in 1906, the Rev. A. W. Smith said, 'Mohammedanism was introduced into the Ijebu country [a huge and densely populated district near Lagos] in 1893, and to-day half its population is professedly Mohammedan.'

a creed so simple and so apparently complete. He knows it offers him a brotherhood and a social status he never dreamt of before. The meagreness of Islam's demands makes conversion easy. He need make but small change in the manner of his life, while, instead of the haunting dread of a world full of evil and evil-meaning spirits, comes the great revelation, 'There is one God.' For him for the rest of life his relation to that God is summed up in one word, 'Islam'—submission. 'We must submit to God.'

Traders or warriors, there is something great about these Moslems. There is a fine picture by Sir Reginald Wingate of Abdurahman Wad en Nejumi, his noblest enemy who fought under the Mahdi in the Eastern Soudan:

'He was a Jaali, one of the not very numerous tribe of Jaalin, but one in whom the Baggara recognized warlike qualities similar to their own, and with whom it was important to keep on good terms. In early life, a Fiki, like the Mahdi, and his devoted friend, stern, hard, ascetic, the thin, dark man was the incarnation of a blind sincerity of conviction. He never transgressed the self-appointed strictures with which he ruled his conduct. Withal, a spice of madness entered into

A  
magnificent  
Moslem.

his composition. There was no man but trusted his word, and his the distant enterprise, his the forefront of danger always was. Mahdiism was the natural outlet for his wild temper. He was the Khalid of the Prophet's wars. He it was who prepared the stratagem which annihilated Hicks. He it was who crept silently round through the shallow mud beyond the crumbled ramparts of Khartoum. In him was realized the phrase, unique in consular dispatch, "They are so fond of the Mahdi, one may say that they are the body, and he the soul."'

And this of Wad en Nejumi's death a few years later :

'All fighting appeared over, when a camel laden with what was at first supposed to be a gun was observed along the line of retreat, surrounded by some forty men. This party, on being observed, was fired on by a troop of cavalry ; the camel fell and most of the men appeared to have been killed ; the cavalry then followed up, and called upon the remainder to surrender, but as they approached, the Arabs supposed to have been killed suddenly sprang up, and rushing at them, a hand-to-hand encounter ensued ; a number were killed, and the remainder returned once more to their camel. They were again called upon to surrender, but their only response was a second charge, which resulted in all being killed except one, who, mounting a passing horse, succeeded in escaping. The cavalry finding no gun on the camel, as they expected, continued the pursuit, but it was subsequently discovered that

the camel had been carrying the dead body of an important chief, and under the direction of Captain Macdonald it was sent to Toski, where it was at once identified by all the captives as that of Nejumi. It eventually transpired that, being severely wounded, he was being carefully tended by his bodyguard, who, placing him on a rough camel litter, had attempted to convey him to the rear. One of his sons, a boy of five years old, was found dead beside the camel, while another baby boy, scarcely a year old, was brought by his nurse into the camp at Toski on the following day.'<sup>1</sup>

We dare to admire him. Can we not sever the man from the system and learn to love him too?

That is the paradox of Islam—the hateful system, and the rough, natural, earnest, lovable man. How shall the Church of Christ bear herself towards it? What does it mean for each individual Christian in these opening years of the twentieth century?

#### QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER X

1. What grounds are there for considering the problem of the duty of Christianity in the face of Islam to be one of the great world-problems of our day?

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Reginald Wingate, *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Soudan*, pp. 239, 431, 432.

2. What do you know of the Mohammedan population of India ?

3. Draw a sketch map of the Turkish Empire. What is meant by the muezzin ?

4. Why is Africa to-day one of the greatest battle-grounds between Islam and Christianity ? What is being done ? What ought to be done ?

5. What do you know of Wad en Nejumi ? How should such men be treated by the English in Egypt ?

## CHAPTER XI

### ISLAM AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

‘For a brave man, to know that an evil is, is simply to know that it has to be vanquished.’—A. M. FAIRBAIRN.

‘O, it is great, and there’s no other greatness, to make some part of God’s creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God.’—CARLYLE.

**Livingstone and Stanley.** ON November 10, 1871, two men met in the heart of Africa. One, David Livingstone, intrepid missionary and explorer, had been lost, and reputed dead for years. The other, Henry Stanley, after long months of heroic search, found the ‘white man with hair on his face’ within sound of the thunderous surf on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, and greeted him with, ‘Dr. Livingstone, I presume?’

The day of that meeting is one of the most significant dates in Africa’s history. Stanley returned home to rouse Europe. Livingstone, worn and weakened by illness, remained. At Ilala, a year after Stanley

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left him, his faithful African boys found 'the great master' kneeling by his bedside, dead.

The life and death of Livingstone is said to have inspired the founding of twenty-two Missionary Societies. Certainly it opened a new chapter in the story of African Missions.

The ears of Europe rang with the tales of Livingstone and Stanley, and the heart of Europe responded to their appeal to heal that great open sore, the slave trade.

And who were the slave traders? Our friends the Moslem Arabs. But Stanley and Livingstone, standing in the heart of that Dark Continent, saw plainly enough that something else was needed to lighten the darkness than even the most vigorous suppression of the Slave Trade and its attendant atrocities. Superstition, misery, degradation, cruelty, were everywhere. And as for the Moslems, pouring in from the north in peaceful caravan or devastating slave raid, they were making the situation tenfold worse in every way than it was. It was evident that no healing of Africa's sores could come from them.

In a famous despatch published in the

The Slave Trade.

Call to the  
Church.

*Daily Telegraph*, on November 15, 1875, Stanley challenged the Church of Christ to plunge boldly into the heart of Africa, and make the countries of the still pagan tribes south of the Great Lakes centres of light for the whole Dark Continent. The challenge was accepted and the implied prophecy has come true.

Missions in  
Central  
Africa.

The Universities' Mission to Central Africa (founded in response to an earlier appeal from Livingstone) has built its cathedral at Zanzibar, on the site of the old slave market, and its work has spread inwards through Nyassaland.

The Livingstonia Mission, founded by the Free Church of Scotland after Livingstone's death, has, in a short space of twenty years, seen wild, warlike tribes, whose chief concern was warfare and slaughter, settle down into hard-working Christian communities.

In Uganda, the Mission founded by the Church Missionary Society a little later, has seen the growth of a Church of 98,000 Native Christians supporting its own 3,000 Native Christian workers and sending its own missionaries into the heathen countries around.

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But in each place they were only just in time; and other regions which were not occupied, the Moslem is winning to-day. Thirty years before Livingstone's death, the great German Krapf, working for the Church Missionary Society, had seen the danger, and had challenged the Church to forge a chain of Mission stations from east to west to bind the Moslem to the north.

Many links of that chain have not yet been forged, and the Moslem has streamed down into the Southern Continent till there is hardly a section of Africa in which he may not be found.

Away in the West in the vast Niger dis-  
tricts the same unequal race is going on,  
but Christendom was later in the field. In  
1899, before our British troops had sub-  
dued the Hausa states, a little party led by  
Bishop Tugwell had penetrated 700 miles,  
even up to Kano. Here the Moslem ruled  
the land and brooked no interference with  
his raiding or his slavery. He was engaged  
in bringing the simple unorganized pagan  
tribes to heel. Christian missionaries  
were the last people he wanted. For  
many months the little defenceless party

The Niger  
and Hausa  
Land.

found no rest for the soles of their feet. If they pitched their tent they were quickly ordered to remove it, the alternative being the executioner's sword. At last, in a little village, they pitched their camp in simple faith among a people of whom not one but wished them gone. Death, and the many fevers of West Africa have worked sad havoc in their ranks, but bravely they kept on, though often one man alone 'held the fort' in Gierku.

A language to be learned and reduced to Roman writing, the Bible to be translated, the suspicions of a hostile people to be allayed, the very *meaning* of the words truth and purity to be taught, learned Moslem Mallams<sup>1</sup> to be dealt with, men and women, boys and girls, in a bondage to sin, such as we have never thought of in Europe, to be led out into the liberty with which Christ alone makes free—that was the task before them.

That was ten years ago: what is found to-day?

A Hausa  
Convert.

'Last summer a Hausa convert, only one year after his baptism, was travelling, for business purposes, to the old and fanatical city of Katsina, 140

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. Teachers.

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miles from our C. M. S. station in Zaria, almost the earliest stronghold of Islam in this land. He was a young man of considerable ability and well known for his learning; his conversion and baptism had caused some consternation in orthodox circles, where it had been freely said that whatever we might succeed in doing among the illiterate, we should never convert a *Mallam*!

‘Soon after his arrival in Katsina, he was sent for by the Emir, who said to him, “We have heard of you, and your reputation has reached here. Why did you leave your own faith and that of your fathers, and become a Christian?” Seeking for God’s guidance, our friend quietly gave his reasons, and spoke of his joy and rest in Christ. He then asked permission to expound the Christian faith, that those assembled (a few of the leading men, including the chief religious Mohammedan official and judge) might understand what he had received in exchange for Islam. This was permitted, and for a long time he preached Christ to them.

‘From that time, during the rest of his stay in the city, not one day passed but he was invited to the houses of the leading Mallams and chiefs, to explain the Christian faith and read the Scriptures in Arabic. So the gospel was faithfully preached to many in this city where no white missionary has been allowed, by one who had been a learned Mohammedan and whom Christ had saved. This same man and others are fearlessly proclaiming Christ, and with ceaseless energy are seeking and praying to bring in their fellow-countrymen to the Light.’

So wrote Dr. Miller in June, 1909. It is but a corner of the picture—but it must suffice us.

Egypt.

The strength of Islam in Africa is Egypt. The great Moslem University of Al Azhar 'is the centre, literally, from a geographical, and actually from a spiritual point of view of the world of Islam,'—a Moslem University which exists to teach the Moslem faith, with thousands of students, and a training that often covers twenty years, to which men come from every outpost of the Moslem world. 'Far the oldest of the medieval Universities, it is the only one which has remained, and remains, medieval in its curriculum, its methods, its whole aspect'—such is the head and heart of Islam to-day.

Shall this citadel of Islam be left unassailed while the Church passes on to easier work? Or is it a challenge for *picked men*, the best our Western learning can produce, to outlearn the learned, to love the hardest hearts and have patience over wooden heads, to believe in spite of all appearances that Truth is great and will prevail? To-day, through the many

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pillared porticoes into the great University Court where for long centuries no Christian could so much as enter, Christian missionaries, true enough, men enough for this, pass freely, welcome friends and visitors. From this Moslem of Moslem Universities, 'students and ex-students have been converted to Christianity, and not a few have, as they paced or sat apart, studied there not the Korân, but the Injil Yasu'a al Masih (Gospel of Jesus Christ) '!

And what of the problem in Asia, the **Asia.** struggle with Islam and its many and various forms there—Islam in undisputed power, Islam plus European influence, Islam under British rule, Islam under Dutch, and French, and Chinese governments, Islam sealing itself against the world, Islam caught in the rush of twentieth-century movements? What is the Church of Christ attempting? What trophies has she won?

Just a hundred years ago Henry Martyn, **Henry Martyn.** a young brilliant scholar, Senior Wrangler of Cambridge, went out to India as a Chaplain of the East India Company. He was only in India four years before he

moved on to Persia, but he left behind him a translation of the Bible into Hindustani. His life was 'cut short,' as men said, at thirty-one.

The fact of his going out at all was staggering enough for intelligent men of his day. But when it transpired that his purpose in taking the post was that he might work among Hindus and Moslems, they had no words to describe his action but 'madness.' 'Absolutely throwing his life away!' said some. 'Of all the ridiculous ideas!' said others. 'Well, of all the impossible tasks!' said the more thoughtful, to whom, in those days, the conversion of a Moslem to Christianity was unimaginable. Possibly if he had stayed at home he might have lived to grey hairs, a life of learning, wealth, and honour. Instead, he planted a tiny living seed in the field of Islam. Was it worth while?

It is reported that he left in India one, and only one, convert, Abdul Masih, the keeper of the jewels at the Court of Oudh. He lived for fifteen years after Martyn's death, labouring among his Moslem compatriots, the first Mohammedan ordained to the Christian ministry.

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To-day among the native pastors and Christian preachers and teachers in North India, there are at least 200 who were once followers of Islam.<sup>1</sup> Imad-ud-Din.

Let one speak for himself. His name is Moulvie Imad-ud-Din, he is a lineal descendant of the famous Mohammedan saint, Qutab Jamal, who traced his descent from the ancient royal house of Persia: he was born near Delhi, in 1830, and died at Amritsar, in 1900.

‘When I was fifteen years of age, I left my friends and relatives for my education, and went to Agra, where my brother, Moulvie Karim-ud-Din, was the Headmaster in the Urdu language. I remained there a long time under him. . . . As soon as I had leisure from the study of science, I began to wait on Fakirs and pious and learned men, to discover the advantages of religion. I frequented the mosques and the houses set apart for religious purposes, and the homes of the Moulvies and carried on my studies in Mohammedan law, the ceremonies of the Korân and the traditional sayings of Mohammed, and also in manners, logic and philosophy. I knew nothing of the Christian religion. I had some doubts in my mind respecting Mohammedanism in consequence of intercourse I had had with some Christians, but the taunting curses of the Moulvies and Mohammedans so confounded

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wherry, *Islam and Christianity in India*.

me that I quickly drew back from all such thoughts. . . . I gave up all thought of disputation, and controversy, and began to take great pains in acquiring knowledge. Without troubling myself about any other concerns, I read steadily night and day and continued doing so for eight or ten years.

‘When the necessary attainments in the outward knowledge of religion had been acquired, and I had become brimful of Mohammedan bigotry from it, I became entangled in another snare which the learned Mohammedans have placed in the path of the seeker after truth. . . . The Mohammedans always at first, and for a long period of time, set forth before enquirers the outward rites of their law, and their bodily exercises and unprofitable stories and the affinities of words used in their controversies. They then tie him by the leg with a rope of deceit, in order to make him sit down and rest contented, by telling him that what he has already learned consists merely of the outward ordinances of Mohammedanism, but that if he wishes to prosecute his studies and investigate the realities of religion he must go to the Fakirs and the Mohammedan saints, and remain in attendance on them for many years because they possess the secret science of religion.

‘As soon as I was entangled in this subtle science, I began to practise speaking little, eating little, living apart from men, afflicting my body and keeping awake at nights. I used to spend whole nights reading the Korân. I put in practice . . . all the various special penances and devotions

## Islam and the Church of Christ 179

that were enjoined. I used to shut my eyes and sit in retirement, seeking by thinking on the Name of God to write it on my heart. I constantly sat on the graves of holy men, in hopes that, by contemplation, I might receive some revelation from the tombs. I went and sat in the assemblies of the elders and hoped to receive grace by gazing with great faith on the faces of the Sufies. I used to go even to the dreamy and intoxicated fanatics, in the hope of thus attaining union with God. And I did all this, besides performing my prayers five times a day, and also the prayer in the night and that in the very early morning, and always was I repeating the salutation of Mohammed and the confession of faith. . . .

‘The thought of utterly renouncing the world then came into my mind with so much power that I left everybody and went into the jungles and became a Fakir, putting on clothes covered with red ochre and wandered here and there, from city to city, and from village to village, step by step alone, without plan or baggage.

‘In addition to the above I wrote the name of God on paper 125,000 times, and I cut out each word separately with scissors and wrapped them up each in a little ball of flour and fed the fish in the river with them in the way the book prescribed. . . .

‘I had got into the same state of mind that many learned Mohammedans have been in under similar circumstances. I once had thought that Mohammedanism was the best of all religions on earth. I had, therefore, believed Christianity to

be untrue: in short, I was a vehement opponent of the Christian religion. I therefore became convinced in my own mind that all religions were but vain fables, and that it was better for me to live in ease and comfort myself, to act honestly towards everybody, and to be satisfied with believing in the unity of God. For six years my mind remained afflicted with these foolish thoughts. . . .

‘I came to Lahore. I here heard of the conversion to Christianity of Moulvie Safdar Ali at Jubbulpore, which greatly amazed me . . . gradually I remembered that Ali was a true and just man, and I began to ask myself how he could have acted in such a foolish manner as to leave the Mohammedan religion. I then thought that I ought to begin to dispute with him by letter about it. With this object I procured the Old and New Testaments and asked an English Christian missionary to read the English Testament with me. When I read as far as the 7th Chapter of St. Matthew, doubts fixed themselves upon my mind respecting the truth of Mohammedanism. I became so agitated that I spent whole days, and often also whole nights, in reading and considering the books, and began to speak about them both with missionaries and Mohammedans. Within a year I had investigated the whole matter, chiefly at nights, and I discovered that the religion of Mohammed is not of God, and that Mohammedans have been deceived, and that salvation is assuredly to be found in the Christian religion.

‘As soon as this had become evident to me, I made everything known to my Mohammedan

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friends and followers. Some of them became angry; but some listened in my private chamber to the proof I gave them. They said quite plainly that they knew that the religion of Mohammed is not true; but they asked me what they could do, when they were afraid of the opposition of the world and of the reproaches and curses of ignorant men. In their hearts they said they certainly believed Christianity to be true, and that Mohammed could not be the Mediator of the men of his religion, but they were unwilling to lose the esteem of the world. They urged me not to make my faith public, but to call myself outwardly a Mohammedan, and yet in my heart to believe in Christianity. . . . The extent of their faith became thus evident to me by their own confessions. I committed them all to God for, besides praying for them, I knew not anything else I could do for them, and I went myself to Amritsar and received baptism.'

Imad-ud-Din entirely omits any reference to his noble decision to decline a lucrative Government position which was offered to him, that he might be ordained to the Christian ministry, and devote his life to the spread of Christian truth among his fellow-countrymen.

'Since my entrance into the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have had great peace in my soul. . . . By reading the Word of God I have found enjoyment in life. My friends and acquaintances and

my disciples and followers and others, have all become my enemies. . . . I therefore pray for them. May God give them grace and open the eyes of their minds that they may be partakers of the everlasting salvation of the Lord, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.'

Shortly after Henry Martyn arrived in India he had written, 'Even if I should never see a native converted, God may design by my patience and continuance in the Word to encourage future missionaries.' Again, was it worth while?

Dutch  
East  
Indies.

In the Dutch East Indies alone there are to-day 24,000 Christian converts from Islam, and from 200 to 300 are baptized every year—the fruit of the labours of stout-hearted Dutchmen.

Persia.

We have so far been meeting strong men, missionary and convert. Let us take a look at a very different Moslem whom we meet in a Christian Hospital for women in the heart of Persia. The English lady worker has just completed her round of the wards, and we greet with her a former out-patient, one of a group of women converts.

'The first of these was Sakîneh, who entered the Women's Dispensary with her aunt, who was ill. At that time Sakîneh was a bigoted Moslem, but



HON. ION KEITH-FALCONER.

*'Strong men, missionary and convert.'*



REV IMAD-UD-DIN D.D.



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gradually the message touched her heart. A year later she came for treatment for herself, her husband's cruelty having made her ill, for which reason he divorced her. Sakîneh was then eager to learn more of Christ's love. Her father beat her cruelly, but this seemed to increase her desire for teaching. . . . She declared her faith in Jesus as the only Saviour . . . and was baptized. Shortly after she began to try and tell her own family and neighbours. . . . The news spread in her village, Hoseinabad, that she was a Christian. Then a system of boycotting and persecution began. Her friends no longer saluted her in the streets, she was pelted with mud and stones, hooted at, called infidel, Nazarene, Christian dog, etc. At the Public Baths a woman noticed she had no Moslem charms on, and charged her publicly with being a Christian. At first she was afraid to reply, then answered "Yes." At once she was cast out, and the place declared defiled by her. She was followed down the street by an angry mob, and beaten with a chain used for whipping donkeys. . . . Her fellow-villagers declared either Sakîneh must be put to death or she and her parents must leave the village. As night came on the mob surrounded the house, threatening to take her life. Her brother-in-law got her over the wall of the village into the desert, and brought her to our house. Sakîneh was unnerved, but kept on repeating, "I have not denied Christ; I want to live and die a Christian."

It was just twenty years ago that Sakîneh bore her brave witness for Christ.

The  
Christian  
Church in  
Persia  
to-day.

It is a beautiful picture, and one full of hope, that remains with us as we leave the sad, inert, decadent land of Persia. There among a people, sinful, sensuous, corrupt, and apparently loveless, at almost every place where in school or hospital, in gaudy harem or in humble cottage, the Gospel of purity and love is preached to-day, are little companies of Persian Christians, men and women who, disowned, impoverished, persecuted, in peril of imprisonment and death, count it a joy to suffer for Christ's sake. Truly in Persia are heroic outposts of the Christian Church.

Ion Keith-  
Falconer  
and Arabia

We close this chapter with a short picture of one of the noble men who have given their lives to win the way into Arabia.

‘ See, in the purpose of God for Arabia, that lad of promise, lovable, thoughtful, strong in mind and body, in his noble Scottish home. See him at Harrow, then at Cambridge, rising above his fellows, many-sided, full of fire and life. Watch him at work, passing rapidly from form to form at Harrow, taking a first in one Tripos and then another at Cambridge, good at mathematics, brilliant at languages, a born teacher, so exact in his working that he masters Dutch Grammar in three weeks

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rather than leave a book in that language, which bore upon a lecture, unread. Watch him at play—bicycling from John o' Groats to Land's End, and winning the Bicycling Championship of England, a man of superb physique and training, "as hard as nails." Watch him at his special hobby—shorthand, an expert verbatim reporter, the chosen writer on phonography in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Down in the slums of Cambridge, or in the East End of London, you may find him too, now raising, or himself giving, funds for some enterprise, now addressing a great meeting, now sitting beside a man who seeks a way to Christ.

'For Ion Keith-Falconer is more than student and athlete—beyond the power of brain and muscle there lies a heart which beats true to its Master, "fervent still after all the turmoil of a great Public School and the more subtle temptations of a great University."

'Surely scholarship and Cambridge claim such a man as this? At nine-and-twenty we find him a learned professor in Cambridge, at thirty a missionary to Arabia, at thirty-one, only six months after he left England, we stand by his grave, the black mountainous rocks of Aden lie behind us, and the white sandy shore of Arabia edges the limitless stretch of the ocean beyond.

'From one point of view, Keith-Falconer's missionary career was disastrous and a dislocation. From another, his going was the most natural thing in the world. Young, strong, free, a master of Arabic, he had the constraining love of Christ within him, and a vision of the Moslem world—

especially Arabia—before. Speaking for the last time before he left Scotland, he said :

“ *While vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness, and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism, and of Islam, the burden of proof lies upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by Him to keep you out of the foreign mission-field.*”

‘ The purpose of the strong man to spend and be spent in the Cause shines out in those last short months. We see him building at Sheikh Othman a centre for his work, talking with patients in the mat-verandah, dropping into coffee-shops to meet in friendly intercourse with the Moslems he loved, picking up and carrying with the aid of his devoted colleague a sick man left to die in the street. Then the fever-mists gather, and the scholar-missionary’s death claims Arabia for her true Lord.

‘ The missionary chapter of Ion Keith-Falconer’s life closed quickly, but the eyes of Christians were opened to the land for which he died.’

Is there such a thing as waste in God’s economy? Is it not written ‘ whoso loseth his life, the same shall find it ’ ?

### QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER XI

1. Of the heroes mentioned in this chapter, whom do you consider the greatest, and why ?

2. What answer would you give to the assertion that Ion Keith-Falconer’s life was wasted through his going to missionary work in Arabia ?

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3. Estimate the extent of the work done for Africa by Livingstone. How far is it being followed up adequately now ?

4. Give some account of the perplexities, hindrances, and difficulties which make it hard for a Mohammedan to become a Christian.

5. Which parts of the Moslem world seem to you in most need of Christian missionaries to-day ? Why ? What sort of men would you send to each ?

## CHAPTER XII

### ISLAM AND THE CHRISTIAN

' So while the World rolls on from change to change  
And realms of thought expand,  
The letter stands without expanse or range,  
Stiff as a dead man's hand.  
While as the life-blood fills the glowing form,  
The spirit Christ has shed  
Flows through the ripening ages, fresh and warm,  
More felt than heard or read.'

MILNES' 'PALM LEAVES'

(quoted in Stanley's *Eastern Church*).

The Story  
of Islam.

WE have reached the end of the telling of our story. Let our minds move over it again once more. Thirteen hundred years ago in Arabia, an insignificant, untamed, untaught 'Land of the Desert,' there arose an Arab man who, forsaking idols, believed utterly in God. His followers poured forth into the world with a Faith that carried all before them. That Faith broke the great imperial civilizations of its day, and bore down the timid standards of a corrupt and palsied Church. Occupying

## Islam and the Christian 189

the Mediterranean countries and the sites of the ancient empires, it established itself as the greatest ruling force the world had ever known. In spite of the rise of younger nations, the magnificence of medieval Europe, the growth of science and the arts of civilization and of war, in spite of many rival empires in the modern 'scramble for the world,' Islam still holds with its tenacious grip the thoughts and hearts of men. It dominates to-day one-seventh of mankind, moving still to fresh conquests of the Faith. We have traced that Faith in history and seen it settling like a deadly blight upon the nations, chilling and paralyzing the moral life of man. We have examined it in its essential meaning and significance.

Islam rises up before us in its tremendous rugged strength, leagued with the wild nature of 200 millions of our fellow-men, and overshadowing Christendom.

'The only one of the great religions to come after Christianity: the only one that categorically denies the truth of Christianity: the only one that has in the past signally defeated Christianity: the only one that seriously disputes the world with

**The  
Challenge  
of Islam.**

Christianity: the only one which, in several parts of the world, is to-day forestalling and gaining on Christianity.'<sup>1</sup>

Isaiah.

In another Eastern land 1,200 years before Mohammed, there lived another Prophet. The country that he loved with a passionate devotion was in sore straits. Two mighty kingdoms, one on either side, were driving their highways across it, and threatening to overwhelm it. The very religion which had been the secret of its greatness was challenged and endangered. Men's hearts were full of fear. To one man was given a vision of hope. He alone among his people pierced the clouds that overcast the sky, and saw the light, and believed with all his soul in the vision that he saw—the vision of the kingdom that should be, the rule of righteousness and joy and peace, whose ensign should be Holiness to the Lord. And seeing the future till to him it was present, he worded it thus:—

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN;  
AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER:

<sup>1</sup> C. M. S. Day of Opportunity pamphlets, *The Moslem Menace*, by W. H. T. Gairdner.

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AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE. OF THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND OF PEACE THERE SHALL BE NO END . . . TO ESTABLISH IT AND TO UPHOLD IT WITH JUDGMENT AND WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM HENCEFORTH EVEN FOR EVER.

And St. John upon the summit of a later day painted with a fuller glory the vision of the City that shall be:—

AND I SAW NO TEMPLE THEREIN: FOR THE LORD GOD THE ALMIGHTY, AND THE LAMB, ARE THE TEMPLE THEREOF. AND THE CITY HATH NO NEED OF THE SUN, NEITHER OF THE MOON, TO SHINE UPON IT: FOR THE GLORY OF GOD DID LIGHTEN IT, AND THE LAMP THEREOF IS THE LAMB. AND THE NATIONS SHALL WALK AMIDST THE LIGHT THEREOF: AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH DO BRING THEIR GLORY INTO IT. AND THE GATES THEREOF SHALL IN NO WISE BE SHUT BY DAY (FOR THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE): AND THEY SHALL BRING THE GLORY AND THE HONOUR OF THE NATIONS INTO IT: AND THERE SHALL IN NO WISE ENTER INTO IT ANYTHING UNCLEAN, OR HE THAT MAKETH AN ABOMINATION AND A LIE: BUT ONLY THEY WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE.

It is the purest form of the old-world vision of the 'Golden Age,' and our hearts acclaim it still.

Here upon this present, prosaic earth to-day, God is laying by human hands the foundations, broad and deep and true, of

Christ's  
Kingdom.

that City yet to be. To this world, where sin threw down the gage of battle, the Child was born. Here He fought and triumphed, and upon this earth was raised His cross, the token of the final victory. Here among men in *this* present world, the battle must be waged, the Kingdom comes.

Every sin, every falsehood, every injustice, every cruelty, every wrong, may challenge but they do not deny that Kingdom—Islam does.

Bringing its ideals down to the level of our nature, it denies the best in man, and denies the Christ of God—the One who alone has triumphed and in whose triumph lies man's only hope. Give the world to Islam, and man's highest vision is gone for ever.

Christian  
and Moslem.

And so we go to meet the Moslem, and he stands before us strong, fearless, brave, determined. What have we Christians that we can say to him? What can we give? What has he already got?

First, he has God, God all-powerful, all-knowing, Master of the Universe and Lord of men. He has a Prophet, human also as himself, to be at the last day, so he says, his mediator in God's presence, pleading there



MOSLEM BOY-FACES (TUNIS).

*'What have we Christians that we can say to them?'*



man's weakness before God.<sup>1</sup> Behind him, with him, around him, stands that great Moslem brotherhood of the 'believers' transcending all race, proud and isolated, mysterious in its kindling warmth and strange fanaticism. For himself, and for them he has his book—his Korân—the final word of God. In it he finds his simple rule of conduct, the things that he must do, his prayer, his almsgiving, the blessing of the pilgrimage, the rules for all his life—nothing impossible in them from first to last, no entanglement of conscience or of principles, no insistence upon the spirit in which they must be carried out. He has his call to service too, for the honour of the Prophet and the advancement of the Faith. And on beyond—his Paradise, the more attractive because so very like this earth without its pains.

What can we say? Talk about compromise between these two religions? Ask him, ask any Moslem, ask the Korân. The two are essentially, absolutely, and for ever, mutually contradictory and mutually exclusive. The Hindu and the Chinese

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Illingworth, *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, Appendix.

may indeed set Christ in their Pantheons. But a Moslem set Christ beside the Prophet? *Never!*

The Proof  
of Christ.

What then have we to offer? Must we Christians cringe in shame and weakness before his grim unthinking faith and rugged earnestness? It is a searching question. Superior knowledge, or as we think a more complete philosophy of things, does not give us a right to interfere with his belief. He starts with an inherent and determined disbelief in the claim of Christ, it is the very core of his religion. He will not listen to our story. He wants *the proof* of Christ.

And where shall the proof of Christ be found? There is one only answer, Christ the Son of God, the Son of Man, staked all upon the Christian—His Spirit in the Christian,—all that story, wrought out in suffering and tears, and the shedding of His blood, His triumph over death, His ascension on high, to be told and retold and told again *in the life* of the Christian. It was always so, He meant it to be so; it was His plan, part of the eternal purpose of God for the Redemption of the World.

The Com-  
mission.

And so the commission to teach all

nations<sup>1</sup> and the promise of the Spirit stand together—two things which God hath joined—the Witness and the Spirit.

In the power and fulness of that Spirit, the little company of weak and vacillating fishermen with their few companions went out fearlessly to win the world for Christ. They dared to believe what He had said—that ‘greater works’ remained for them to do *because* He had gone to the Father.

What mattered then the frowning mask of things, the deadness of the decadent old world, the hateful lust of Grecian cities, the murderous gladiatorial games, scourgings, imprisonments, death? They never doubted the final triumph. Let St. Paul speak out his mind—the secret of the final triumph :

HAVE THIS MIND IN YOU, WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS : WHO, BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD, COUNTED IT NOT A PRIZE TO BE ON AN EQUALITY WITH GOD, BUT EMPTIED HIMSELF, TAKING THE FORM OF A SERVANT, BEING MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN ; AND BEING FOUND IN FASHION AS A MAN, HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF, BECOMING OBEDIENT EVEN UNTO DEATH, YEA, THE DEATH OF THE CROSS. WHEREFORE ALSO GOD HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND GAVE UNTO HIM THE NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME ; THAT IN THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THINGS IN HEAVEN AND THINGS ON EARTH AND THINGS UNDER THE EARTH.

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 8.

Hear St. Paul again, revealing the secret of his own life, 'I live : yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME.'

We may answer the Moslem just in proportion as that is true of us—made true by the Holy Spirit.

What else was it in Raymund Lull that made him the one apostle of the Moslems of his day? Whence else came Henry Martyn's quiet, dauntless faith? What else was the source of Ion Keith-Falconer's heroic devotion? To the deadness of Islam, they brought the living Christ: 'The Life was the Light of men.'

The Moslem has blessed us by asking us the question, by forcing us to ask it of ourselves!

The age of the apostles is not a closed chapter of history, like the departed glory of Athens or the Elizabethan age. God still moves amid His Church.

**The Stirring  
of the  
Nations.**

We have been called to live in this twentieth century amid the most tremendous events—save one—the world has ever known. Let us remind ourselves that before the guns of the Great War rolled their terrible thunder, things had been happening in Asia and the East, and particularly in the

Moslem world, which were of hardly less importance than the war itself.

The great nations of Asia awoke, as though shaken from an age-long sleep by some mighty galvanic shock. One after another the customs, traditions, and beliefs of centuries have been cast aside. Everywhere is felt the pulse of new ambitions and the desire to get abreast of the modern peoples of the world. Hence mighty and sweeping movements for education and reform, showing themselves hardly less in Turkey and Egypt than in China and India, in this twentieth century, creating a new desire to learn, a deeper sense of need, a readiness to consider and weigh new propositions, and an altogether new opportunity for preaching the eternal Gospel of life, the only true foundation upon which men and nations can build.

And now we are passing through times such as Britain has never known before. The whole nation is pouring out its best, giving them, as it believes, as sacrifices for the world's freedom and the life of generations to come.

The war will be over some day, and those who survive it and those who come

after will not forget their glorious dead. They will realize that these lives were given to redeem Britain's opportunity.

It will lie with the present generation of Britain's schoolboys to see to it that they did not purchase that opportunity in vain. To you for whom this book has been written, and for whom it has been revised in barracks, will come the nobler opportunity of the truly holy war—the rebuilding of the world's waste places, the healing of its sores, the substitution of truth and purity where now there is falsehood and wrong. It is the opportunity of the ages. What can we say of it all but this—‘God fulfils Himself in many ways’? It is God, God moving behind and shaping history towards its goal.

‘For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.’

The Call of  
Christ.

Christ walks to-day upon our streets,  
He is with us in our homes, He draws  
near to our great schools, He stands over  
us as we kneel in prayer, seeking for young  
knights of His cross, weak enough to lean

on His great strength; dependent enough to trust with childlike faith; willing to be made pure enough to see God; true enough to reveal His love to men; brave enough to make a great adventure for His sake; utterly His, that in them for the sake of the great needy Moslem world He may fulfil His word:

VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME, THE WORKS THAT I DO SHALL HE DO ALSO; AND GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL HE DO; BECAUSE I GO UNTO THE FATHER.

AND WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK IN MY NAME, THAT WILL I DO, THAT THE FATHER MAY BE GLORIFIED IN THE SON.

‘ O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,  
Fight as the Saints who nobly fought of old,  
And win with them the Victor’s crown of gold,  
Alleluia ! ’





## APPENDICES AND INDEX

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# APPENDIX A

## SOME BOOKS ON ISLAM

THE following books will be found very valuable by those who, as leaders or members of **Missionary Study Bands** or in private reading, desire to pursue further the fascinating Story of Islam.

Only a few of the smaller and less expensive books are included in this list.

**THE REPROACH OF ISLAM.\*** By W. H. T. Gairdner. (2s. net.) The 'Senior Study Book' of this series is an invaluable companion to the 'Story of Islam.'

**MAHOMET AND ISLAM.\*** Sir. Wm. Muir. (Religious Tract Society, 2s. 6d.) An epitome of the Author's larger standard works.

**THE RELIGION OF THE CRESCENT.** W. St. Clair Tisdall, D.D. (3rd edition, 1910, S.P.C.K., 4s. net.) Scholarly and accurate.

**MUHAMMAD AND HIS POWER.** P. de Lacy Johnstone. (T. & T. Clark, 2s. 6d. net.) An excellent, fair, and well-written biography.

**MOHAMMED AND THE RISE OF ISLAM.** By Professor D. S. Margoliouth. ('Heroes of the Nations' Series; Putnam, 5s. net.) A popular biography.

**THE PREACHING OF ISLAM.\*** T. W. Arnold. A standard work giving a very favourable account of the rise of Islam.

**RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD.** G. M. Grant. (Black, 6d. net.) The essay on Mohammedanism in this valuable little book is full of reliable history and suggestive thought.

**EASTERN CHURCH.** Dean Stanley. (Dent, 1s. net.) Several chapters in this standard history deal with the rise of Islam in relation to the Christian Church. See also Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' Vols. V. and VI., and Draper's 'History of the Intellectual Development of Europe.'

\* Out of print, but obtainable from Libraries.

**ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA AND IN THE FAR EAST.**

E. M. Wherry. (Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 4s. net.) An invaluable study of Islam in India, both in history and as it may be seen to-day.

**THE GOSPEL IN NORTH AFRICA.** By J. Rutherford and E. H. Glenny. (North African Mission, 1s.) A thrilling account of the founding and work of the gallant North Africa Mission.

**RAYMUND LULL, FIRST MISSIONARY TO THE MOSLEMS.** By S. M. Zwemer. (Funk & Wagnalls, 3s.)

**D. M. THORNTON.** *The Preacher Prophet.* (C.M.S., 1d.)

**RIVER, SAND AND SUN,** by M. C. Gollock (C.M.S., 2s. net), gives many vivid pictures of Islam as seen in Egypt.

**MARY BIRD IN PERSIA.** By Clara C. Rice. (C.M.S., 3s. 6d.) A striking account of work amongst Persian women.

**MOHAMMEDANISM. HAS IT ANY FUTURE?** C. H. Robinson. (S.P.G., 9d. net.) Some most valuable essays on Islam as seen in Hausaland.

**THE MOSLEM WORLD.** (Christian Literature Society for India, 1s. net.) A quarterly review of current events and the progress of Christian missions in Moslem lands.

The following books would form a valuable addition to School Libraries :

**AMONG THE WILD TRIBES OF THE AFGHAN FRONTIER.** Dr. T. L. Pennell. (Seeley, 5s. net.)

**D. M. THORNTON.** *A STUDY IN MISSIONARY IDEALS AND METHODS.* W. H. T. Gairdner. (Hodder, 3s. 6d. net.)

**HENRY MARTYN.** By Geo. Smith, C.I.E. (R.T.S., 6s.)

**HON. ION KEITH-FALCONER.** By Robert Sinker, D.D. (Bell & Co., 7s. 6d.)

## APPENDIX B

### A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF SOME OF THE IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE STORY OF ISLAM

<b>A.D.</b>	
570	Birth of Mohammed.
595	Marriage with Khadijah.
610	Mohammed's first 'Revelation.'
620	Deaths of Khadijah and Abu Talib.
622	The Hegira or Flight to Medina.
624	The Battle of Badr.
630	Capture of Mecca.
632	Death of Mohammed—Abu Bakr, Caliph.
634-637	Conquest of Syria.
635-642	Conquest of Persia.
640	Conquest of Egypt.
651-750	The Caliphs of Damascus.
700-800	Islam spreads in Central Asia and China.
711	Moslem rule in Spain.
732	Battle of Tours—Europe saved from Islam.
749-1258	The Caliphs of Baghdad.
1019	Mahmoud of Gazni enters India.
1096	The First Crusade.
1147	The Second Crusade.
1100-1200	Islam spreads to Western Soudan.
1200-1300	Mongols overrun Central Asia—Jenghis Khan.
1235-1315	Raymund Lull.
1299-present time.	Turkish or Ottoman dynasty.
1369-1405	Timerlane, Mogul conqueror in India.
1453	Constantinople captured by the Turks.
1492	Battle of Grenada ends Moslem rule in Spain.
1507	Islam spreads in East Indies.
1500-1552	Francis Xavier.
1527-1707	Mogul Empire in India.
1683	Turks defeated before Vienna.
1750	Islam begins to spread in Negro Africa.
1757	Battle of Plassey—British rule in India.
1806-1812	Henry Martyn in India, Persia and Armenia.
1868	Imad-ud-Din ordained at Amritsar.
1873	Death of Livingstone at Ilala.
1880	Founding of North Africa Mission.
1881	Rise of the Mahdi (Khartoum).
1882	British occupy Egypt.
1885	Death of General Gordon—Fall of Khartoum.
1887	Death of Ion Keith-Falconer at Aden.
1889	Arabian (American) Mission organized.
1898	Fall of Mahdi—British occupy Eastern Soudan.
1899	Hausaland Mission founded.
1900	British Protectorate over N. Nigeria and Hausaland.
1907	Turkey's 'Bloodless Revolution.'
1908	Growth of Reform Party in Persia.

# APPENDIX C

## MOSLEM POPULATION OF THE WORLD

<u>Asia—</u>	Total Population.	Mohammedan Population.
India . . . . .	308,965,933	65,955,886
Dutch East Indies . . . . .	38,216,979	35,308,996
Russian Empire (including Bokhara and Khiva)	167,003,400	20,000,000
Turkey in Asia . . . . .	19,705,200	12,278,800
Chinese Empire . . . . .	427,135,305	8,421,000
Afghanistan . . . . .	5,900,000	5,000,000
Persia . . . . .	5,000,000	4,500,000
Arabia . . . . .	2,500,000	2,500,000
Ceylon . . . . .	4,105,535	276,361
Rest of Asia . . . . .	—	2,449,067
<i>Total for Asia</i> . . . . .	—	<u>156,690,110</u>
 <u>Africa—</u>		
Egypt . . . . .	11,287,359	10,269,445
Rest of Africa . . . . .	—	31,769,904
<i>Total for Africa</i> . . . . .	—	<u>42,039,349</u>
 <u>Europe—</u>		
Turkey in Europe . . . . .	2,000,000	1,000,000
Balkan States . . . . .	17,000,000	699,637
Great Britain . . . . .	45,369,090	1,000
Rest of Europe (not including Russia) . . . . .	—	673,039
<i>Total for Europe (not including Russia)</i> . . . . .	—	<u>2,373,676</u>
<u>America</u> . . . . .		<u>174,061</u>
<u>Australia</u> . . . . .		<u>19,500</u>

TOTAL FOR MOHAMMEDAN WORLD, 201,296,696

## APPENDIX D

### POLITICAL SURVEY OF THE MOSLEM WORLD

#### Moslems under Christian Rule or Protection.

Great Britain	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{in Africa, } 22,606,344 \\ \text{in Asia, } 67,871,767 \end{array} \right\}$	90,478,111
France	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{in Africa, } 15,085,000 \\ \text{in Asia, } 232,000 \end{array} \right\}$	15,317,000
Germany, in Africa	.	1,480,000
Italy, Portugal, Spain, in Africa	.	1,825,000
United States, in Asia	.	277,547
Nether-lands	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{in Africa, } 60,000 \\ \text{in Asia, } 35,308,996 \end{array} \right\}$	35,368,996
Russia, in Europe and Asia	.	20,000,000
Europe	.	1,373,676
America	.	174,000
Abyssinia and Liberia	.	780,000
<b>Total under Christian Rule</b>		<b><u>167,074,330</u></b>

#### Under Moslem Rulers.

Turkey	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{in Asia, } 12,278,800 \\ \text{in Europe, } 1,000,000 \end{array} \right\}$	13,278,800
Afghanistan	.	5,000,000
Persia	.	4,500,000
Arabia	.	2,500,000
<b>Total under Moslem Rule</b>		<b><u>25,278,800</u></b>

#### Under Non-Christian Rulers other than Moslem.

Africa	.	203,005
Chinese Empire.	.	8,421,000
Siam	.	300,000
Japan and Formosa	.	200
Tibet	.	28,500
<b>Total under Non-Christian and Non-Moslem Rulers</b>		<b><u>8,952,705</u></b>

NOTE.—The above figures have been taken from the Statistical Survey by Professor Westermann and Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D.D., given in *The Moslem World*, April 1914.

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